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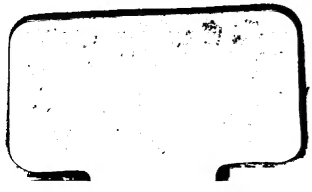

LIFE IN VICTORIA.

LIFE IN VICTORIA

OR

VICTORIA IN 1853, AND VICTORIA IN 1858

SHOWING

THE MARCH OF IMPROVEMENT
MADE BY THE COLONY WITHIN THOSE PERIODS, IN TOWN
AND COUNTRY, CITIES AND DIGGINGS.

BY WILLIAM KELLY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, GREAT SALT LAKE VALLEY, AND GREAT SIERRA NEVADA," AND "A STROLL THROUGH THE DIGGINGS OF CALIFORNIA."

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

PREFACE.

I WENT to Port Phillip in the latter end of 1852 with the intention of making a rapid but observant tour of that colony, and giving the results to the public in the following year. But the glowing temptations to speculate, the rich visions of yellow nuggets, contrasted so alluringly with the stunted rewards of literary labour, that I soon abandoned the aspiration of flourishing on paper for the expectation of figuring more profitably in trading, land jobbing, or digging pursuits.

I have endeavoured to narrate faithfully the chequered vicissitudes of my various avocations, because they tend in a great measure to illustrate the unprecedented progress of the colony in its social, political, commercial, and mining phases; and though many of the details may be devoid of that stirring interest suited to the desultory reader, I trust they are so far imbued with truthful information as to redeem them from any general verdict of condemnation. Interest, it may be said, is a condiment capable of being manufactured specially to flavour literary ragoûts; but as such an article only amalgamates genially with apocryphal information, I preferred telling my story without any such seasoning, rather than have the authenticity of the scattered crumbs of intelligence it contains called in question.

I had the good fortune during my homeward voyage of numbering amongst my fellow-passengers several experienced gentlemen, whose knowledge of commercial and digging matters enabled me to fill up many skeleton sketches, to prune down occasional exuberances, and to enumerate dogmatically certain opinions concerning the auriferous resources of the colony, which I would not otherwise have ventured to whisper, clashing as they do with the grave pronunciations of a scientific commission.

Some of my sketches may appear overdrawn to the home reader, as popular illustrations of Petticoat-lane scenes do to the antipodean denizens of Belgravia. But I can appeal to any candid dweller in Victoria, during the periods about which I write, if there is a tint or trait too highly coloured, or too broadly elaborated. To the colonial reader I will only make this prefatory observation. If at times he finds it difficult to detect the outlines of my pictures through the dull haze of description, he must at once refer it to my want of graphic power, and call to mind the plaintive avowal of a poetic prototype, who once upon a time sang in deprecation of cavil—

> I give thee all, I can no more,
> Though poor the offering be.

In conclusion, I have to remark that long ere these volumes are encased in their covers, I shall be far away on my voyage towards the most modern of gold-fields—British Columbia—to face another campaign of houseless wanderings, through savage tribes and sterile wildernesses, and I therefore trust both critics and readers will extend to me a modicum of that proverbial immunity usually awarded to departed friends—an anticipative type of which charitable principle was formerly practised even by the Colonial Office, in supplementing the outfits of Sierra Leone officials, by

granting them liberal allowances towards their funeral expenses. Besides, I must mention in confidence that I write "a shocking bad" hand, and I fear much that the gentleman who has kindly undertaken the task of correcting the proofs, will find it fraught with hieroglyphical difficulties alike beyond his anticipations and his capabilities.

THE AUTHOR.

P.S.—I wish I could have launched my book under shelter of a respectful dedication, but as that solemn rite is never ventured on without a "kind permission," I must content myself by stating that, had I the authority, I would have enthroned as its patriarchal patron the Honourable John Pascoe Fawkner, M.L.C., who, "take him for all in all," is indubitably the foremost man in the colony of Victoria. It was his bold enterprise that first broke the long sleep of primeval nature in that favoured land, and beckoned thither Christian light as well as British energy, and he now enjoys the rare felicity of seeing the savage desert of 1835 invested with all the exalted functions of a nascent empire, beating throughout its remotest extremities with the strong, healthy pulse of civilisation, attracting commerce and settlers from every quarter of the globe, and feeding the mills and mints of the universe with her staple products. Mr. Fawkner found the site of Melbourne an aboriginal wilderness, and he will leave on it the queen city of the southern hemisphere.

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In the year 1850, crippled from the effects of my excursion across the Rocky Mountains and the great Sierra Nevada, and suffering from land scurvy after a severe winter's exposure in the northern diggings of California, I was advised to try a sojourn in those emerald gems of the Pacific the Sandwich Islands, where fruits, vegetables, and goats' milk overabound. At that period there was a difficulty in obtaining a passage, as the trade between California and the insular dominions of King Kamehamea was insignificant; but an opportunity at length presented itself. A barque was advertised for Manilla, touching at Honolulu to

complete her crew, in which I secured a berth, but on condition that I would keep my regular watch, take my turn at the wheel, and make myself generally useful on deck and below, as I was not then in a state of body to go aloft.

The barque's crew consisted of the captain, an energetic, clever fellow; a lad in the capacity of first officer, who was a runaway midshipman (as I understood) from Messrs. Green's employ; three men who shipped as able seamen, but who never hove a lead in their lives; an old sea cook who came out in the vessel, and continued to live the life of a recluse aboard her in Francisco Bay for eighteen months; and a smart French garçon, who undertook the duties of steward and pastrycook—rather a scant complement for a barque registering 550 tons. But the charterers hired a gang of boatmen to heave up the anchor and make sail, who helped us to work the vessel through the tangled fleet of ships that was then spread over the broad bosom of San Francisco harbour. The moment, however, we emerged from the portals of the Golden Gate those worthies slipped over the side, wishing us a pleasant voyage in a tone of irony which seemed to insinuate that its duration would be much longer than agreeable, regarding us at the same time with a look amounting to pity at our infatuation in leaving a country which then seemed to be the goal of the whole human race.

As we glided before the land breeze fairly out to sea, the smooth rounded swells of the Pacific rose and sank with a placid uniformity as if they were the mighty pulsations of the universe, while the bold, stern outline of coast range mountains from which we were insensibly receding, and the gorgeous bath of crimson ether into which the sun was luxuriously sinking in the western horizon, presented a scene of sublimity and grandeur that inspired feelings of intuitive untaught adoration for the glories of Omnipotence.

While gloating over this great natural picture, the vessel, from want of wind to steady her, rolled lazily about in a manner not at all calculated to repress nausea in constitutions having any tendency in that direction, and the appearance of a pallid stranger languidly emerging from the companion suggested the idea that the ship herself, uneasy in the internals, was sending up her bile. The stranger was a passenger like myself, a martyr to the gold mania, going in search of his squandered health to the volcanic islets of the tropics, under conditions of servitude during the voyage as well as myself, and in that querulous temper generally attendant on infirmity, particularly when associated with disappointment. He had taken up his quarters on board for some days in consequence of the dearness and discomfort of Francisco hotels in those days, and being familiar with the nature of the preparations and the characteristics of our companions, he expressed a desire to be of my watch, feeling, I should think, from being brought up in the same sphere of life, and being imbued with a truant disposition of a somewhat similar ardour, that reciprocal sympathy would grow up betwixt us, and that we could compare notes and communicate experiences.

I was enabled to make arrangements in conformity with his wishes, and on our first watch that night—clear, bright, and beautiful as summer nights are in the regions of the Pacific—John I——g B——d sat on the latticed stage on which I stood at the wheel to tell me his history, as if it would be a relief to disburden himself of his story, or, more probably, perhaps, to extract some ministerings of sympathy for his temptations and disappointments. His juvenile London indiscretions, or his more mature extravagances, I will pass over, with the remark that they constrained him to

emigrate to South Australia, where he first settled down in the capacity of a squatter. At a subsequent period of his career he associated himself with a few enterprising individuals, who, hearing of the extent and fertility of the new settlement of Port Phillip, resolved on paying it a visit, to determine with their own eyes and judgments whether it was a district deserving of its fame, or one holding out greater advantages than their own colony.

He told me of their journeyings and explorations, dilating with rapture on the splendid park-like aspect of the country, on the broad expanses of verdant plains, rich with nutritious herbage, suitable alike for sheep or cattle, and on the many picturesque romantic districts which seemed to be created as the sites of happy homes, where existence alone would be an enjoyment. He dwelt with the fondness of enthusiasm on the beauties of the vale of the Yarra-Yarra, with its deep and tortuous river, hemmed in by mountain banks, clothed with blossoming evergreens, or winding its fertilising course through broad meadows of deep alluvial deposit, tracing it down to where its waters lave the feet of the infant city of Melbourne, where he said he speculated in suburban allotments, from which he looked forward to realise very large profits. He stated he had commenced making arrangements for removing permanently from South Australia to the Port Phillip district when the Californian gold discoveries took place, but the mania consequent thereon overturned all his plans, and instead of transporting his flocks to the new settlement, he transmuted them into merchandise, shaping his course for the new El Dorado, where he arrived at an inauspicious time, scarcely realising more than paid freight and charges on this venture. He then tried the diggings, where his health dwindled away with the small residue of his capital; and, as a final move, he determined on allowing

his shattered existence to ebb out amidst the balmy groves of the Sandwich Islands. On subsequent evenings he frequently indulged in outpourings of self-reproach at his weakness in being allured from his well-digested project of emigration by the lust of sudden acquisition; and many, many times he exhorted me, with the fervour of an affectionate brother, to realise all my effects in the old country, and make Australia Felix my adopted home.

I remained in companionship with him in the neighbourhood of Honolulu for three months, and left him established in a pretty humble home, rearing fowl and raising vegetables, which produced a comfortable competence from the very high price paid for them by whalers frequenting that port, but I carried away with me a strong desire of visiting the young colony which he delighted to portray in such alluring colours, and that desire resolved itself into determination, when, on reaching England at the close of the following year, I found the first instalments of the maiden treasures of Mount Alexander and Ballarat exciting the public mind with the most exaggerated schemes and expectations.

Once resolved, I quickly set about my simple preparations, selecting London for my port of departure, as I would strongly advise all respectable voyageurs to do who can appreciate comfort, decency, and discipline. This advice I offer not only as the result of my own personal experience, but as that of all travellers whom I have heard express opinions on the subject. Amidst the embarrassing variety of vessels on the berth for Port Phillip in the autumn of 1852, I pitched upon a robust, seaworthy-looking Danish ship, attracted as well by her extreme cleanliness as by a notification on her poop-rail "that she would only take six cabin passengers," being confirmed in an early opinion during my eccentric ramblings, that matters would go on

much more comfortably and smoothly on board ship if all vessels were confined to one class of passengers, without any distinctions whatever. For, if we are haunted with heartburnings, and envies, and jealousies in the wide, wide world, where there is so much room to avoid and escape them, how much more must not those feelings be embittered in floating prisons, where the causes are brought every minute of the day, as it were, under our noses, with cuddy passengers pompously exalted on the poop or quarter-deck, in constant presence of the humbler second cabin passengers, who are again invidiously separated from those in the steerage by a notice warning the canaille "not to walk abaft the mainmast."

Of the six passengers one was my brother, another an agreeable and accomplished old friend of the long robe, and the other three of a congenial stamp, so that the programme of our daily arrangements for the voyage was drawn up and concluded in a spirit of mutual accommodation. The owner, too, acted in a spirit of genuine liberality as to our stores, and assigned us a cook and steward to act specially under our own orders; but at Gravesend, where we joined the ship, we experienced a formidable drawback to our pleasing anticipations on finding the crew stowing away ten tons of gunpowder under the main-hatch, which, the pilot remarked, "was just in the proper position to render strict justice to all, in having our ashes equably scattered by the south-east trades should we get entangled in the meshes of the tropical chain lightning"—a circumstance quite within the range of probability, seeing that the ship was not provided with conductors.

In Margate Roads we encountered our second contretemps, being pinned to the ground for five days, in the midst of a large fleet, by an adverse wind, which increased into a whole

gale for the last twenty-four hours. But while we all strained and groaned at our anchors as if clinging to our only hope of salvation from the Goodwin Sands, those wondrous craft the Deal boats flitted about like stormy petrels, seeming to revel in the conflict of the elements; and late in the last dark night, when the hurricane was raging at the top of its fury, an oilskin apparition arose in the rattlings before any of the watch were aware that a boat was alongside. This turned out to be a Deal boatman come to inquire if we were a passenger short, as he had a drunken man in his forecastle who had paid his passage and shipped his luggage, containing fifteen hundred sovereigns, but he lost his purse containing the receipt, and forgot the name of the ship. Being informed that the man was not of our party, he remarked, "It's damned hard on my crew, for we've been a cruisin' all night among the fleet, and our customer has not got a blessed mag to pay us for our trouble; but it will be no end of a buster to himself, for there's sure to be a nor'-east wind afore morning, when all you out'ard-bounders will be up anchor an' away. Would any of you gemmen like this evening's *Sun* or *Globe*, the last noose-paper you'll see this side of the line? an' if you have any letters for the old folk at home, I'll take 'em ashore and post 'em all right."

True enough, the wind shifted as the dawn approached, and daylight revealed a scene such as can only be witnessed at the mouth of the Thames under like circumstances. It was an eager strife between the crews of two hundred vessels to see which could be got under weigh first, and I believe if the successful captain was to receive a prize of 1000*l.*, and his officers and crew a shower of Victoria crosses, it could not have been more keenly contested, nor the spirit and skill of the British tar more excitingly demonstrated. But the most consum-

mate address could not carry all clear with so numerous a fleet, and so circumscribed a pool for manœuvring. There were many innocuous foulings and collisions, which, however, led to such fierce denunciations and threatenings from the various skippers and pilots, that an unsophisticated spectator would have imagined a bloody sea-fight had commenced, in which no quarter would be either given or accepted, for those in fault were to the full as loud, and apparently as angry, as the most blameless, both reciprocally devoting each other, without any purgatorial compromise, to monosyllabic torture. Our burly pilot helped to swell the chorus with his deep-mouthed objurgations, while our captain and his officer jabbered away frantically in the unknown tongue as a great pudgy brig, after failing to fill on her proper tack, came broadside down upon us as we were paying away beautifully on our course, impaling her standing rigging on our jib-boom. Her crew, as is usual in such cases, tore madly up the rattlings to snap our spar in two like a rotten carrot, while at the same time our lads rushed out each side on the bridle to pluck out her masts by the root, and shove them ashore for firewood; however, this alarming-looking affray terminated in the severing of a few of our ropes and a slight crush on the bulwarks of the brig, and by the time we got clear of each other every vessel in the fleet was fairly full, standing away down Channel under a fine whole-sail breeze.

This was on the 18th of December, 1852, a morning almost too lovely for the season, for the sun emerged at breakfast-time with a richness and warmth altogether unusual at the decline of the year. As our ship was a capital sailer, we kept gradually creeping through the crowd, frequently passing vessels bristling thickly with emigrants, all seemingly bound to the same land, for whenever we came right abeam of any of them we were invariably saluted with a boisterous broadside

of "Australy for ever!" which they as invariably followed up—as if by the special injunction of the emigration agent—with a monster concert, having for its staple Henry Russell's great *non sequitur* song, commencing,

Cheer, boys, cheer, for home and mother country,

and concluding with an overtopping encomium on

The new and happy land.

I once caught the soft tones of a tremulous whistle carrying the tender burden of the "Girl I left behind me," which emanated from a frieze-coated group, who were leaning over the bulwarks of a clipper barque, gazing fixedly on the water, and perhaps contributing warm drops of brine to the ocean highway; and I well remember that the last cargo of hopeful exiles we passed superadded to their "Cheer, boys, cheer," the fine national melody of "Auld Lang Syne," which was chanted in stentorian style by a clan of Scotch-bonneted folk who stood upon the top-gallant forecastle of a noble ship, and imparted a truly dramatic effect to this heart-stirring song at the line "And here's a hand my trusty freen'," by grasping each other's hands with an energy which became electrically infectious all over the vessel, leading to a grand manual union from stem to stern.

The same evening we sighted St. Catherine's light, and commenced manufacturing a mull of claret as a sacrifice to the Fates, in the full expectation of a safe and speedy voyage; but before it was fully prepared the wind veered round to the west, and there, with trifling variations, it hung for thirteen days, blowing great guns, and attended with such thick weather, that I believe we only got the sun twice in the entire period, during which we were compelled to grope our way with the leads, narrowly escaping several collisions,

and when at length a favourable slant set in, we found by observation that the Scilly Isles were in dangerous contiguity. But a bright morning and a fair wind soon carried us clear of harm's way, causing us to forget the perilous buffeting of the English Channel; and right gloriously for days did our gallant ship tear onward on her course across the grossly traduced waters of the Bay of Biscay, past the latitude of Cape Finisterre, and amongst those tiny nautical fabrics of natural construction yclept Portuguese men-of-war.

On the morning of the 11th of January the high land of Madeira was sighted dead ahead, when our captain obligingly shaped his course so as to give us a good opportunity of observing that picturesque island, with its abrupt cliffs, its deep ravines, and steep, tortuous roads. We were enabled distinctly to discern the trim vineyards in their regular terraces, and could trace the streets and gardens of a neat village, with its pretty whitewashed church seated on the crowning table-land.

The next land we made was Trinidad, a high, rocky, bald island, on which we could see crowds of pigs and goats, and only that the surf was so high, we would have gone ashore to augment our stock of fresh provisions. We also sailed close by the Martin Bass rocks, which rise precipitously from the ocean in tall, naked deformity, without the slightest clothing of vegetation, and totally devoid of any resource likely to tempt man to dispute the sovereignty with its feathered occupants. In this neighbourhood we were favoured with the appearance of a waterspout, whose gyrations at one time tended exactly in our direction, but it fell to pieces before it approximated too closely to beget any apprehension.

Soon after, we got amongst the Cape de Verds cluster in singeing weather, which broke the seal of torpidity with the

cockroaches, and rendered our butter into a rancid fluid only capable of being utilised with a brush. We tried jam as a substitute, but it was only a trial; for of all earthly preserves, preserve me, I say, from ship's jam, which is a tough, glutinous compound, resembling candied molasses stiffened with pitch, and flavoured by some occult process with a raspberry, strawberry, or currant smack, without imparting the slightest débris of the fruit. By dipping the point of a finger in it and running to the end of the ship you will have manufactured a tough cord capable of bearing a considerable strain, and I have not the slightest doubt but that a coating of it on the boom end would catch an albatross.

The Cape de Verds have a haggard, half-roasted look, without a single feature of that fresh, pouting expression to captivate a passer-by, peculiar to the seductive island paradises in the tropical regions of the Pacific. Sal is high and rugged, only peopled in consideration of its salt trade, which is carried on by evaporation. Bonavista is also high and jagged, but, as well as we could scan its configuration, it has deep rugged valleys, and some insignificant tracts of parched level land. St. Jago is the seat of government, and at some future day, from its position, may become a coaling station for ocean steamers in the Australian trade; but there is no intrinsic attractions in this high-toasted group to beget either an emigrational or filibustering invasion.

Our next stage was the great terrestrial griddle, on which we were hung up to dry in a roasting calm for nine days, with a vessel on our starboard beam, barely discernible at first from the maintop, but, as if from the powers of mutual attraction, we so approximated on the sixth day as to see plainly crowds on her poop and top-gallant forecastle; and as a compensation for the abnegation of any courtly interchanges with Neptune, our captain had a boat lowered, and

gave us a crew to visit our marine neighbours. Our intentions, which were soon descried, were greeted with a faint cheer, which reached us in a spent shape; but when we got fairly within hailing distance, as if Hullah was in the maintop with his bâton, five hundred and sixty-seven voices burst forth with the precision of a bomb, bellowing forth—what do you suppose?—why, none other than the celebrated "Cheer, boys, cheer, for home and mother country," on which they were so complacently turning their backs of their own free will and accord. We were treated with great hospitality, and got eighteen days' later news from England; but the stifling atmosphere in the cabins, caused by the animal heat and exhalations of this mass of human beings sweltering in the very furnace of the torrid zone, obliged us to forego the many warm invitations that were pressed upon us to spend the night.

As we gave way, on our return to our own wooden home, which looked like a great marine excrescence fixed and motionless in the deep, we elicited another vehement salvo of "Cheer, boys, cheer;" but there was a salvo of another description evidently impending, which caused us to pull with a will. The sky became ominously overcast with opaque, bobstery-looking masses pregnant with electricity, the air at the same time getting stagnant and unbreathable, while big blobs of rain plashed about irregularly, as if dripping from leaky clouds. As we got on board, a muffled rumbling commenced deep in the womb of the heavens, and the volumes of black vapour opened in lurid seams, emitting javelin flights of forked lightning, followed by crashing peals of thunder that seemed to explode close over our heads, rocking the masts in their sockets, and shivering the polished surface of the sea like water in a glass globe whose pedestal has received a violent concussion.

For fully three hours this grand but awful spectacle was continuously sustained: fiery serpents darted through the rigging, thunder-claps brattled about our ears, the tapering topmasts of the ship being capped by electric clouds, while her hold contained enough of gunpowder to blow St. Paul's into fragments. It was just such a sort of conjuncture as my most fervent aspirations desire to avoid for evermore; and although we all affected composure, it was nothing better than the most arrant hypocrisy, for I am not credulous enough to give any man credit for real tranquillity, however well he may assume it, while closeted with a pair of wild sparks fencing with red-hot pokers across a well-aired keg of powder, even though he knew they meant no mischief. I can candidly answer for myself, that, being in utter ignorance of the designs of Providence on the occasion in question, I was decidedly uncomfortable, and felt nervous twitchings and misgivings about being served out there and then for my numerous peccadilloes.

After this terrific turmoil we caught a nice leading wind that carried us into the southern trades, but as several of our water-butts had been stove in the English Channel, the captain talked of touching at Tristan d'Acunha. The first officer, however, gave us a hint that he would be easily overpersuaded to call at the Cape in preference, as he had a Dulcinea there, whose former scruples would most likely vanish on seeing him in command. It was rather amusing to observe the manner in which he received the first suggestion, and the way in which he disposed of the difficulties that he himself started, backing and filling, as the sailors say, before he gave his final assent; but when once our course was changed, it became quite evident he was steering by a compass of natural construction.

CHAPTER II.

Sight Table Mountain—Extraordinary Optical Illusion on entering Table Bay—Cape Town and Neighbourhood—Society there—Trade—Country Excursion—Visit Scyoli, the captive Caffre Chief, at Wynebergh—Leave the Cape of Good Hope—Great Excitement at Sea—An Expedition—Its Result—Our Consolation—Sight St. Paul's and Amsterdam—Description of those Islets—Make Cape Otway Light—Scene on entering Port Phillip Heads—Shipwreck of the *Sacramento*—Port Phillip in 1799 and in 1853—Mrs. Hartley's Letter of the former Date—Appearance of the Heads—Williamstown—Sandridge—Shore Scenery—Shore Canvassers—Our Passage contrasted with the first Voyage of the *Marco Polo*—The past Style of Navigation and the present.

We sighted Table Mountain after breakfast on the 13th of March, and, with a fine free wind all day, got abreast of the Lion's Rump early in the evening, when it immediately fell dead calm. We had thus a good opportunity of surveying the fine bold scenery around the northern and western base of this isolated mountain, and the numerous lovely marine residences skirting the shore all away round Greenpoint, which constitutes the headland of Table Bay. Being anxious to land, we hailed several fishing-boats, but none approached, and as there was not an air of wind stirring, we made up our minds to remain aboard all night. As the darkness settled down, a most strange—to us, but not unusual—phenomenon met our eyes. The entire sea, en-

circling the ship as far as we could see, became, as it were, suddenly transmuted into a white milky lake, illuminated to a considerable depth by phosphorescent matter, which enabled us to see with the most marvellous distinctness the myriads of fish of different size and specie moving slowly in shoals, or sometimes darting in pursuit of each other. Never having previously heard or read of such a spectacle, it struck us with corresponding amazement to witness so instantaneous and opposite a change in the dark blue waters of the deep, and to see its denizens moving about through it as if unconscious of any change whatsoever. In observations made by Mr. Langstaff in a voyage from Port Jackson to China, he says: "About half an hour after sunset the sea suddenly changed to a milky appearance, and the ship seemed to be surrounded with ice covered with snow. A bucket of water was hauled up and examined in the dark; a great number of globular bodies were discovered in it, each about the size of a pin's head, linked together; the chains thus formed did not exceed three inches in length, and emitted a pale phosphoric light. This extraordinary appearance of the sea was visible two nights, but as soon as the moon exerted her influence, the sea resumed its natural dark colour, but exhibited distinct glittering spots even then." The phenomenon in our case assumed quite a different phase as to the transparency of the waters, and I only regret that we did not get a bucket of it on deck, though I believe at the time we would have hesitated doing so, lest it should have the effect of breaking the seeming enchantment. About midnight a light northerly wind enabled us to come to an anchorage in Table Bay, where we could see there were several ships.

In the morning we were astir early, but there was a dense fog, from the tinge of which we were conscious that the sun

was blazing out above its bank. Strange to say, as the morning advanced, instead of being evaporated and dispelled, the fog became more and more depressed and thickened, the process continuing slowly, until we could see the topmasts of the ships about us peeping up as through a thick horizontal screen; next, the bold brow of Table Mountain arose as if by machinery; then by slow degrees all the higher shore objects became successively disclosed, until finally the city of Cape Town was gradually revealed, like a beautiful panorama. I never remember having so intensely revelled in the enjoyment of spectacular gormandisement as on that occasion, nor is there, perhaps, in the wide world a town more grandly or picturesquely situated. We all got our go-ashore toggery rigged, but the captain was the over-topping swell of the party, "and we knew the reason why." He picked a crew of his comeliest boys, had some ship's colours spread in the stern-sheets, and then we gave way for the shore with becoming pomp and pageantry. The town, though substantially built, well laid out, and containing fine houses, gay shops, and really grand stores, was parched, dusty, and glaring. The steep hanging slopes around it, though smooth and verdant-looking at a distance, were only coated with a coarse tufty herbage, that was anything but agreeable on close inspection. The grand, bold, frowning mountain at the back alone maintained its morning place in our estimation. The streets are regular, the roadways and trottoirs are kept in excellent order, the buildings are substantial, the shops attractive, and the warehouses extensive. But there is no stir amongst the regular inhabitants; the numerous periodical visitors, with their trains of servants, from the Indian provinces alone contribute to maintain a sort of languid animation in the place. Business there crawls instead of bustles, and so unaccustomed do shopkeepers appear to be to active

trade, that when you enter their premises they almost regard you as an intruder, never asking you "if they can serve you," and if they happen not to have the article for which you inquire, they turn their backs rudely, and "can't say where you were likely to get it." In fact, it appears enigmatical to me how merchants and shopkeepers there can afford to keep their great stores, their large staff of hands, their immense stocks, and their handsome country houses. There is little or no society save that exotic sort introduced by the families of Indian officers and civilians on leave. There are no places of public amusement, and the only place of public resort I could discover was the Botanic Gardens, which are creditably kept. The invention of clipper ships and the establishment of the Peninsular and Oriental Company have seriously injured Cape Town, as the former rarely call either on their out or home voyages, while the wealthy passengers who would spend money when ashore now invariably go the overland route, and as Indian officers on leave can enjoy the advantage of full pay while on leave in the Australian colonies as well as at the Cape, it is probable, now that there is a steam connexion between them and India, that they will command a preference. I rode out in an excellently appointed omnibus, most skilfully driven by a Hottentot Jehu, along the beach road by Greenpoint to the Lion's Rump, the fashionable suburban quarter. The houses there were well got up and handsomely furnished, but the grounds and gardens were invariably arid and neglected. On my return, I visited the meat market, in order to purchase a beef to present to the crew, and although there were nearly one hundred carcases to choose between, the best was only fit for a soup-kitchen; they looked as if they had been all working bullocks that dragged waggons down from the interior, where the tsetsé fly had sucked out all their

blood and substance before starting. The sheep were only a degree better, appearing to accumulate all the condition on their tails. Even the fowls were a gaunt, stilty, long-legged tribe, with muscular thighs, but without embonpoint; and as for the fish, I wouldn't keep a strict Lent in the colony for a pope's tiara. However, the fruit and vegetables went far to redeem these drawbacks. They were worthy of Covent-garden market, especially the grapes, every bunch of which was a hand-load, and every fruit a mouthful.

Of course we made arrangements to visit Constantia, taking Wynebergh on the way. It is a beautiful drive, through a highly improved country, over a capital macadamised road. At Wynebergh we had a most delicious repast on grapes and melons, after which we went to visit the captive Caffre chief Scyoli, who is devoid of any outward indications of decided character to distinguish him from the common herd of savages, and without any of that bearing of natural dignity so frequently met with in barbarian chieftains, for on offering him a packet of tobacco, he snatched it just in the same style that a baboon in a cage would clutch at a walnut. We were prevented from proceeding to Constantia by a violent upset caused by the breaking of our axle, and on our return to town, after a twelve miles' walk, we found the captain awaiting our arrival to take us on board, as all the fresh stores had been shipped, and a fair wind was blowing.

Three days after leaving the Cape, on the approach of evening, a man in the foretop sang out something in Danish, which caused the first officer to go aloft, and after peering intently in a south-eastern direction for some moments, he came down, and made a communication at head-quarters, whereupon the captain, glass in hand (eye-glass), mounted the main rigging. He, in turn, made some observation in the Norse dialect, and looked again; and as I felt curious to

ascertain what the object was, I went up so far as the main truck, where the captain joined me, directing my attention to what looked like a water-logged dismasted ship, or a raft. I immediately took hold of the glass, and had a steady, earnest look, when I clearly discerned living beings on the wreck, and two or three times saw white objects moving, which I set down as signals of distress. We both descended quickly to consult what was to be done, and, of course, it was unanimously resolved to afford succour. The ship was, therefore, put about instantly, in expectation of fetching the wreck in the next stretch, and the boat in the stern was made all ready for lowering. All were animated with one desire, and never were the winds more earnestly supplicated for favour than on that occasion. On a signal from the mate, who stationed himself in the foretop, the vessel was again hove in stays, but as she came slowly round to the wind, it was evident that the darkness which had been stealing silently over the waters interposed a serious obstacle to the success of our search. Like everything else in this life which we deprecate, it appeared to hasten and thicken. The mate came upon deck, feeling he could be no longer of any service aloft, but, in order to keep hope alive in the hearts of those poor beings "drifting upon a moonless sea," we fired several shots, and burned blue lights at short intervals, listening eagerly for some shout or sound from the raft that would serve to indicate the direction in which they lay; but all was silence as solemn as the darkness. The mate again went aloft, but as the thick film of night was impenetrable, he returned to the deck, joining our group upon the poop, where for a little we remained mute, all waiting for a suggestion. At length I proposed that the boat should be lowered, a light burnt at the mast-head, and a volunteer crew mustered to depart on a search; but the captain, with as benevolent a

desire to aid the suffering as any one on board, declined acceding to the plan, stating, at the same time, that he would have the ship hove-to until morning, and, meantime, all means and measures of assistance could be concerted. It appeared to be a tacit understanding come to intuitively that there was to be a universal watch kept all night. Torpor was effectually kept at bay by reflection. The painful contrast of our comfort and security with the horrors and anxieties of the poor wretches on the raft, kept our sympathies on the rack as the now lazy hours of gloom crawled along with most harassing tediousness. The captain had hasty stock taken of our supplies, with a view of determining whether we would be enabled to proceed to our destination or return to the Cape; and as eight bells sounded we all went on deck, though it was still dark, determined to watch the first grey glimmer of morning. It was gratifying to find the wind moderate and the sea comparatively smooth, and in anticipation of the peep of dawn the boat was lowered and manned, and a small supply of brandy, biscuit, and water stowed away, the crew waiting anxiously and eagerly to give way the moment the finger of the mate in the maintop could be seen indicating the position of the raft. I never experienced moments of greater anxiety; and when he hailed, with outstretched arm pointing away to the northward, we cast loose the painter, and pulled round the ship's bow with hearts throbbing almost audibly. The captain held the tiller-ropes, and I stood in front of him on the look-out, while the men pulled with a will for about twenty minutes, when a something foreign quickly crossed the field of the unsteady glass; but on bringing it steadily to bear, I caught sight of the desired object. The light above was now tolerable, but a thin mist hovered on the surface of the sea; nevertheless, I could perceive the motion of living things through the veil.

I hailed at the top of my lungs, and the lads lifted from their seats as they sprang to their oars; I hailed again, but no responsive shout echoed back the thrill of deliverance. The low object could now be seen with the naked eye. The daylight was clear. The captain, with the tiller-ropes in his hands, got to his feet beside me. The eyes of the men were fixed upon our faces as we neared it. A few boats' length nearer still brought us into full view the dead body of a huge whale covered all over with sea-fowl. It was rather a ludicrous termination to so exciting an undertaking, but we consoled ourselves with our good intentions.

Next day we got a good westwardly slant, which followed us for fifteen or sixteen days, bringing us within sight of St. Paul's and Amsterdam, where it calmed for about twenty-four hours. It is said there is one inhabitant in St. Paul's. There were originally two; but malicious rumour assigns the disappearance of one to the wicked hand of the present survivor. These islets are small, of volcanic origin, with hot springs, of a temperature sufficiently high for cooking. They also abound in springs of good cool water, and the shores swarm with fish. Horsburgh gives an instance of one ship's boat's crew catching five tons of striped mackerel and several hundred codfish, in their immediate vicinity, in a few hours; and he also affirms that a whaler, during a short stay there, killed twelve hundred seals. There is a tolerable harbour at St. Paul's, and it is not improbable that, one day or other, it may be turned to some use or account, in connexion with the Australian trade. From thence we quickly sped before a strong westerly wind, until we got into the neighbourhood of Cape Otway, on which high headland, about seventy miles from the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, there is a light-house. After dark, on the evening of the 29th of April, we saw a strong light seaward, evidently on board ship, which

soon grew into a fire, and momentarily became larger and fiercer. As the wind answered, we bore down straight upon the burning mass, almost without a hope of reaching it in time to save a soul; but we soon had our fears relieved. It certainly was a tremendous fire on board ship, differing, however, from a ship on fire as much as a horse-chesnut differs from a chesnut horse. It was nothing more than the crew of a large whale-ship boiling down their blubber, which in the distance, on a dark night, produced a most alarming effect. We now put about ship, and stood towards land cautiously for two hours, when we had the extreme gratification of sighting the Cape Otway light, and then, knowing exactly where we were, we crept northward, under easy sail, until morning.

The morning's sun of the 30th of April, 1853, revealed a scene at once distressing and interesting. On the north point of the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, a fine new ship, the *Sacramento*, with four hundred emigrants and a valuable freight of sovereigns, lay ashore on the reefs, the sea making a clean breach over her, and fast breaking her up. The poor emigrants were to be seen struggling through the surf, obliged to abandon all their little effects; but there was not any loss of life, owing to the prompt and energetic assistance of the pilots, whose station was close by, and through whose agency the treasure was also rescued, for which they were awarded 7000*l.* salvage. The wretched passengers were truly to be pitied, wrecked after a prosperous voyage, and cast destitute, but not friendless, on the shores of the long-looked-for land of promise. They had to endure bitter sufferings and anguish of mind for some days; but a spirit of generous sympathy arose in Melbourne, pervading all ranks and classes, and a large sum of money was subscribed to

provide them with necessaries, while every housekeeper in want of a servant, every trader in want of a storeman, every mechanic in want of a hand, gave a preference to the ship-wrecked passengers by the *Sacramento*, who were thus, in a great measure, compensated for their misfortune.

Looking seaward from the unfortunate wreck, fifteen fine ships, some smaller than ourselves, and some nearly double the size, were tacking about, like a fleet manœuvring before a fortified port, and only waiting for the order of the admiral to bear down and force the entrance. They were waiting and waiting in vain for pilots, all of whom were humanely employed at the wreck. At length one came off, and boarding the ship in the van, he signalised to the others to watch and follow his course. It was a fine, spirit-stirring scene to see all these large emigrant-laden ships filing into column to enter the harbour, every soul on board them madly anxious to jump ashore and adopt the land, which, only fifty-three years before (two years from its original discovery), was abandoned as an arid, barren country, too inhospitable even for the rigours of a penal colony. Yes, a little over half a century ago, the *Lady Nelson* carried away the governor and suite, in charge of their convict family, to settle on the banks of the Derwent, in Tasmania, leaving William Buckly, a runaway prisoner, to forget his own language in the jargon of the aborigines, and to remain as a connecting link between the Christian and the savage, until the enterprising Batman, in 1835, landed, in prosecution of a wild, personal project, which has led to the development of the richest country ever linked to the British crown, and will most probably eventuate in the foundation of an empire in the southern hemisphere as mighty and as glorious as any that has ever flourished under the emblems of the Cres-

cent or the Cross. It would be unjust and ungrateful when noticing the event above adverted to, to omit recording a passage from the letter of Mrs. Hartley, the wife of one of the officers of the expedition, written to her sister in England on the eve of her departure to Van Diemen's Land, which shows her just and gentle appreciation of the beauties and salubrity of the soil, spurned, without investigation, by those whose proper duty it was to have explored and examined every resource before pronouncing the decree of condemnation and abandonment. She writes, in October, 1803, "My pen is not able to describe half the beauties of this delightful spot, where we have spent four months. Much to my mortification and loss, we are obliged to abandon the settlement, through the whim and caprice of the lieutenant-governor. Additional expense to the government, and loss to individuals, will be incurred by removing to Van Diemen's Land, which will never suit so well. Port Phillip is my favourite, and has my warmest wishes. During the time we have been here, I never have had one ache or pain; and I part from it with more regret than I felt when parting from my native land."

The *C*****k*r* was about the middle of the line as it passed through the narrow entrance, and she alone, of the fifteen sail, was mute and failed to salute, as with a fair wind and a flowing tide she shot past the lighthouse, and dropped anchor in the pool in front of the pilot station. And what do you imagine, gentle reader, was the salute? "The British ensign at the main?"—guess again: "Gunpowder and oakum?"—guess again: "Three genuine British cheers, with a discharge of pickled caps?"—as far from it as ever. It was the ever-ringing, never-dying ditty, which appears destined, like the sun, never to set or cease on or in the British dominions—it was the everlasting "Cheer, boys,

cheer, for the new and happy land," issuing from five thousand frantic vocalists, as if they were bellowing for a prize. The entrance to Port Phillip is about the same width as that leading into the bay of San Francisco, but is not nearly so deep, and is altogether wanting in that majestic grandeur imparted to the portals of the Golden Horn by the lofty mountains of the great coast range. On the top of the projecting cliff to the westward stood the lighthouse and telegraph station. On its eastern slope, the whitewashed cottages of the pilots were the only residences to be seen; while on the depressed sand tract constituting the eastern entrance point, a few ragged tents were pointed out as the quarantine station. But the former has become a pretty and fastly-flourishing township,* now boasting its churches, marine villas, and nice regular streets, and already precociously hinting at the propriety of municipal institutions. It is altogether free from that irritating summer visitant, the mosquito, and, being situated in the southern circumference of the bay, it is beyond the reach of those suffocating dust-clouds, propelled by the hot winds, which invariably blow from the north, for the dust subsides into the water before it crosses the forty-mile bay, and the dry, roasting temperature of the wind itself is materially modified and improved in the same passage. The quarantine station is no longer composed of calico shanties. A fine capacious stone structure, of handsome architectural elevation, has been lately erected for an hospital, laid out and fitted up in the most liberal style, and embracing all those sanitary improvements and adjuncts which the latest scientific and professional skill in the old countries has found to be beneficial.

We came to anchor early in the evening in Hobson's Bay,

* Queenscliffe.

about midway between the towns of Williamstown and Sandridge. The former, originally intended as the capital, was called after the sovereign of the day, the latter deriving its patronymic from the nature of the soil on which it stands. Melbourne city, only two miles distant, had a mature and imposing appearance, altogether incompatible with its recent birth, while the low eastern shores of the bay and higher backgrounds, pleasingly sprinkled with elegant villas, afforded proofs of progress and refinement far away in advance of our previous conceptions.

As the evening was raw and squally, we elected to remain on board; but we were crammed with all the latest shore news by the hordes of canvassers from hotels and boarding-houses, who talked about gold as if it was "too much of a good thing"—a mere drug in everybody's hand, which excited no more lust amongst colonists than pig-iron would amongst Welshmen. The captain got very fidgety as he saw the sailors gulping down these exaggerations, and as the last shore boat shoved off he had all the loose oars put in chains under lock and key, to guard against desertion.

Our voyage occupied exactly one hundred and thirty-three days from the date of our leaving Margate downs, being nearly as protracted a period as that occupied by the *Marco Polo* in her first celebrated double run out and back, when, it is said, her owners, on having received a telegraphic message that their ship was off Holyhead, began most despondingly to speculate on the disaster that could have driven their vessel back after having been five months at sea, never once imagining it possible that she could have reached Melbourne, landed her passengers, taken in ballast and cargo, and reappeared in the Mersey within a time very little over the average duration of the outward passage alone. But the

clippers have produced a revolution in navigation, and have subdued the obstinacy of British ship-builders, whose old-fashioned, wall-sided, flat-bottomed sailing machines were regarded as prodigies if they made a passage out and home from India in a day under the twelve months.

CHAPTER III.

Batman's first Visit to Port Phillip—Its first terrestrial Christening—The first Deed of Conveyance—Its Character—The Consideration—First City Site chosen on Gellibrand's Point—Abandoned soon after on the Discovery of the Yarra-Yarra—Translated to the Site of the present Capital—Description of Williamstown in 1852—Williamstown in 1857—Colonial Steam-boat—Her Arrangements—Her Passengers—The three Swells—The Contrast they afforded—The Yarra Banks—The Mooring-post—The Landing—Dismay of the Swells at the Aspect of Affairs—State of the River Banks—Destruction of Merchandise—Past and Present—Bay and River Charges—The first Acre sown with Wheat in Port Phillip—Its present Use and Value—The first Church Service "in the new and happy Land"—Batman's first Sheep Station—Its present Flock—Origin of the Plan of Melbourne—Interesting Extract—San Francisco compared with Melbourne.

On the 29th of May, 1835, twenty-three years ago, and about thirty-one years after its former abandonment, John Batman entered Port Phillip Bay, and came to anchor off Indented Heads, where he landed and made an excursion into the interior, lured along by the charms of the country, without meeting any more ferocious animal than the meek and timid kangaroo. After several other explorative rambles and interviews with the aborigines, brought about through the agency of some Sydney natives whom Mr. Batman judiciously brought over with him, and who communicated to those wandering people the motives of his visit, it was agreed, by arrangement, that a conference should be held in

a promontory further up the bay, which Batman christened Gellibrand's Point, in honour of one of his most distinguished associates, Joseph Tice Gellibrand, ex-Attorney-General of Van Diemen's Land, and on or about the space where Williamstown now stands a contract was signed, sealed, and delivered, by John Batman on the one part, and three royal brothers euphoniously called Jagga Jagga, together with five minor chiefs, on the other, granting to the said John Batman 600,000 acres of land, radiating in a northerly, easterly, and westerly direction from the point on which the document was executed, for the consideration of a few gross of razors and a few bundles of blankets.

It would appear that at this time Mr. Batman intended making this point the nucleus of the new settlement and founding the capital thereon. But the total absence of water in the neighbourhood, as well as the immediate subsequent discovery of the river Yarra-Yarra, induced him, it is presumed, to acquiesce in adopting the more preferable site on which Melbourne now stands, whither King John the First, by the grace of blankets and razors, transferred his royal establishment, and erected his throne on a conical eminence at the western end of the new suburbs, which then received, and still retains, the sobriquet of Batman's Hill. I take for granted it was owing to this circumstance —the removal of the court—that during the eighteen years which elapsed from that period nearly up to my landing in May, 1853, the infant city remained almost *in statu quo*, lying in a trance of perfect torpidity for sixteen years, but awakening to something like animation in 1851 on the discovery of the gold-fields. Yet even in the two succeeding years it made but very slow and rude progress, for when I stepped on its rickety pier, which rocked enough to make an inlander sea-sick, the only symptoms of a town I could discover were

some large weatherboard arks anchored in the mud; one or two occupied as butchers' shops to supply the shipping, one or two licensed to stupify their customers with adulterated alcohol, a leviathan eating-house, superscribed with the notification "Dinners always ready from morning till night," and the postscript, "Hot soups always on hand." There was a large grey calico smithy alongside, emitting showers of sparks, which, curiously enough, flew upwards without igniting the inflammable roof, and close by a shipwright's yard, with an office and dry workshop, covered in by a long-boat inverted and elevated on piles. There was a straggling suburb of ships' galleys and hurricane-houses, with here and there a few buoys, as if to indicate the line of safe thoroughfares, while the shore, up to high-water mark, was covered with a débris of drift spars, broken oars, ship-blocks, dead-eyes, used-up passengers' beds and pillows, dilapidated hen-coops, empty brandy cases, broken bottles, and kegs with a ballast of salt water.

But the Williamstown of 1857 is really an important place, intersected with wide, regular streets, curbed, channelled, and macadamised, with regular trottoirs, fine stone and brick buildings, private houses, excellent hotels, fine shops, most spacious and well-assorted general stores, branch banks, churches of all denominations, a railway connecting it with Geelong, and another on the eve of completion, that will extend into the heart of the gold-fields, and link it by a fork to the metropolis. The Williamstown terminus will be connected with a fine pier running into water sufficiently deep for the largest clipper ships to discharge alongside, and will soon be able to boast a patent slip, on which any vessel afloat—except, perhaps, the *Great Eastern*—can be run up and repaired. In 1853 it was too insignificant a spot to have its inhabitants numbered, but in 1857 it was found to

contain a resident population of 3536 souls, besides an enormous floating population, always ebbing and flowing. It is now locally governed by a municipal corporation, which elects its own mayor and common council, and, to cap the climax, returns a member to the Legislative Assembly of Victoria,—rather a marvellous career of progress and improvement, it must be admitted, within the brief space of four years.

After a considerable delay—mind you, in 1853—a nondescript-looking thing in the shape of a broken-winded steam-tub came alongside with a bump that nearly knocked the pier off its legs. It looked like a colonial ballast lighter into which an in-coming ship had discharged a steam-engine, and set it to work in a hurry. There was no 'tween decks, but a line drawn close after the funnel distinguished those exclusive passengers who preferred paying 7s. 6d. for a river trip of a few miles from the meaner multitude who confined their expenditure to 5s. Taking them for all in all, they were a mixed and motley lot, principally of the class below the middle order, amalgamated with a small leaven of the upper crust of Old World society, who, having experienced the folly and pecuniary inconvenience of leading the lives of gentlemen at large, had, with a wise, brave, and praiseworthy resolution, donned the jumper and laced-up water-tights, to earn an honest livelihood with a quiet conscience and a good appetite. There happened, however, to be a triumvirate on board, who constituted a marked and amusing contrast to the great majority, leaning on slim, attenuated umbrellas, dressed with the most mathematical precision in faultless West-end habiliments, patent leather boots, and French kids that showed the shape of the finger-nails, and would have revealed their crests had they been engraved on them, so accurately did they fit. Each of these swells had a light

carpet-bag, lankily packed with some angular stuffing, which indicated toilet gear, and perhaps boot-trees. They were odorous of Atkinson, and puffed their cigars in a dainty fashion, calculated to reprove the vulgar, vigorous style of fumography of the other passengers; but, with all their nonchalance, they did not appear at their ease, looking as much out of place as a trio of dahlias in a corn-field, where the heads, shaking in pity, whispered into each other's ears, "What on earth can those delicate, gaudy flowers mean to do amongst us plain, rough, matter-of-fact corn-stalks?"

Although the current of the Yarra-Yarra is sluggish, it took nearly two hours to breast—not cleave—that tortuous river. For seven miles above its junction with the Salt-water River, its southern bank was thickly and deeply fringed with a tea-tree scrub, which would be impenetrable but for its suppleness; and within about a mile of the city its northern bank was lined with an unbroken chain of slaughter-houses and fellmongery establishments, which filled the circumambient air with the most sickening odours, that were prevented from stagnating by huge dropsical-looking pigs that kept constantly wallowing in the decomposed offal. Prodigious rats also patronised that quarter, seemingly divested of that suspicious timorousness which characterises their genus in most other countries. When at our destination, the boat was made fast to a weather-worn stake —not improbably the identical one which John Pascoe Fawkner drove into the virgin soil of the Yarra bank to moor his little barque, the *Enterprise*, on Sunday, the 21st August, 1835, about two months after the cession of the territory to John Batman, whose police—the Sydney natives—informed Mr. Fawkner and his associates "that their master was king of Port Phillip, and having purchased all the lands thereabout,

warned all trespassers to keep aloof." We managed to land somehow without leaving our boots as hostages in the mud, but it was a matter of impossibility—they would have it—for the three swell gentlemen to get ashore without a gangway; however, as there was no such article of nautical furniture aboard the *Flying Fish*, they had no alternative but follow suit. When they got on *terra firma*, and stamped the loose mud off their nice boots, one of them, looking about with an air of ineffable horror, drawlingly accosted a bystander: "Tom, do you desire a job?" "What sort?" "Just to carry a carpet-bag." "Will it want two to take it?" "No." "Then take it yourself," was the cool reply, which ended the colloquy.

The north bank of the Yarra, at that time, from the falls down to the slaughter-houses, was a slough of dark mud in a state of liquidity, only a very few degrees removed from that of the river, and along it the entire distance was a line of lighters and intercolonial vessels, four deep, discharging promiscuously into the mire bales of soft goods, delicate boxes of dry goods, cases of brandy, barrels of flour, packages of Glenfield's patent starch, "warranted used in the royal laundry," mixed pickles, real Havannahs, Cossepore sugar, Mocha coffee, Bass's pale ale, Barclay's brown stout, double-rose Cork butter, Scotch oatmeal, and a hundred-and-one other and sundry articles, piled up in mountains in the muck, of which the "dry goods" not unfrequently constituted the lower stratum or foundation. The freight of this merchandise from the bay to the wharf was then 30s. per ton, and the allowance for breakage, damage, and peculation was averaged at 10s. more, to which another half sovereign added for cartage, gave a total freight from ship's side to the store of 50s. per ton,—within a very little of the amount charged for its transport from the London Docks to Hob-

son's Bay. The present freight from the bay is only 5s. per ton, the lighters, in unfavourable winds, being always tugged up by steamers, making a trip in the tide, instead—as was frequently the case in olden times—of a month; the crews then never thinking of despatch, so long as there were preserved meats, Burton ale, and bird's-eye tobacco aboard. But now, when they reach their destination in the Yarra, they are moored alongside ranges of wharfs extending nearly a mile, constructed in a style quite equal to those of any old-country port, with excellent sheds at regular distances, where the most perishable goods can lie with safety in the most inclement weather; rather a quick march of improvement and reform, in connexion with which I must mention that cartage has declined to 3s., and storage from 4s. per ton per week to about one-tenth of that charge, so that account sales now rendered to consignors must be prodigiously disencumbered of their early plethorism, if I may coin a word.

My fellow-passengers and myself having made a slight river acquaintance with an intelligent and obliging old chum—a word then foreign to our ears—were agreeably conducted by him a little distance to see some of the most contiguous antipodean lions, one of which, close by our landing, was the first acre of land fenced in and sown with wheat by Mr. Fawkner in 1835, on which the extensive smoke-vomiting foundries of Messrs. Langlands and Co., and Messrs. Fulton and Co., now stand, melting metal and pounding malleable iron into all the various shapes necessary for cultivating the soil, and extracting its unbounded mineral resources. I should be afraid to repeat the valuation put upon those properties—exclusive of the buildings—by my old chum friend—for in 1853 a land mania prevailed—but I will give a line to those conversant with figures for

forming a judgment of their intrinsic worth in the present rational times. The plot of ground on which the Primitive Wesleyan chapel stands at the corner of Great Collins and Queen streets, containing about one quarter of an acre, more or less, was lately sold by the trustees of that body to Mr. Nehemiah Guthridge for 40,000*l*., the Bank of Australasia having bid up to 35,000*l*. This same allotment, be it known, was sold by auction at a Government land sale in November, 1837—the second which had taken place in the colony—for the modest sum of 35*l*., and changed hands, in two years afterwards, for 40*l*. We next went a little to the westward, and ascended the eminence still called Batman's Hill, on the summit of which that gentleman had erected the first Christian habitation in the "new and happy land." There, too, the Rev. Mr. Orton read the first church service, and chanted the first hymn of thanksgiving to the beneficent Creator of the universe, before a select but rather motley congregation, for, in addition to Mr. Batman's family and attendants and his few associates, there was a sable group of Sydney natives, attired in white Indian costume, and a village of Port Phillip aborigines of both sexes, robed in opossum skins, who seemed to be more impressed than astonished at the simple but solemn and earnest ceremony. The hill remains to the present day in its primeval coat of verdure, bearing the same herbage which sprouted as the waters receded from the face of the earth, with a few disconsolate she-oaks, little better than forest ghosts, mourning over the departed independence of their soil, as the north-east wind sighs through their ragged foliage. The only modern innovations on this tumulus is a powder-magazine on its western flank, and a range of railway offices on its north-eastern base. There is a splendid and expansive view from its top. To the north, Footscray, and the great open country

up to the dividing range, whose line is indicated by Mount Macedon. To the south, the green eminence of Emerald Hill; and in the distance Gardener's Creek district, St. Kilda, Brighton, and the easterly indentation of the bay. To the west, Sandridge, Hobson's Bay, Williamstown, Corio Bay, and the ranges and bold peaks at its back. To the east, the fair city of Melbourne, with the crown of Collingwood peeping up in its rear, the tumultuous Dandenong hills, and the densely-wooded Plenty ranges, standing obliquely in the background. From the hill we proceeded a short distance to a more depressed eminence, which Mr. Batman selected as his sheep station, erecting a shepherd's hut very near, if not on, the precise spot where St. James's church now stands, having the Very Rev. Dean Macartney as the spiritual shepherd, looking after the religious comfort and Christian improvement of his human flock. And now, before proceeding to report my personal progress, I will indulge in a few remarks about the infancy of Melbourne. Captain Lonsdale obtains the credit of having, in the first instance, selected and definitely pitched upon the site of the city, but I believe Charles Joseph Latrobe was the person who conceived its really grand and comprehensive plan. In the early days of his vicarial rule land was cheap, the cares of office light, political agitation in the womb of the future, squatters occupied their boundless territories without exciting the envy or jealousy of the other classes, and the sobriquet of Digger was exclusively divided between the primitive Indian of that ilk in the central basin of America, and the rollicking son of the Emerald Isle, who brought his favourite esculent to light on the point of his spade. Mr. Latrobe, having little or nothing to do—as an antidote to ennui, a species of pastime—sketched out during his spells of day-dreaming recreation the skeleton of a vast city, which he entertained

as little notion would ever be animated and filled in by a dense trading and professional population, as that a line of telegraph-wires would be laid to the moon. The central plan was a series of streets running east and west for nearly a mile, the five principal ones being ninety-nine feet in width, and five minor ones—three hundred and sixty-five feet in the rear of the others—thirty feet wide, intended to be used as mews; these streets were intersected at right angles by seven others, sixty-six feet wide. There were two large squares reserved within its area at either extremity as markets, besides several spacious reserves for religious endowments and public offices; and without any apparent probability that even this space would be occupied within the limits of a century, the town boundary was extended away into the Bush, and imaginative parks, and parades, and gardens without number, and of the most ambitious dimensions, were deliberately mapped and duly staked off. But the day-dream has turned out a reality, for these remote parks and pleasure-grounds are now being bounded by extensions of the original streets, lined with stately dwellings and magnificent terraces, arising, as it were, out of the ashes of the aboriginal corrobborees, surrounded with smiling parterres, and indented with cellars of generous wine, buried in the bosom of the soil to cure it of hydrophobia.

As I am disinclined to commence a narrative of my rambles at the end of a chapter, I will wind up this with a short extract from an excellent periodical, started and edited by William Henry Archer, Assistant Registrar-General of Victoria, than whom there is no better statistical authority in the colony. The periodical is entitled *Facts and Figures; or, Notes of Progress, Statistical and General, for Australian Circulation.* The number from which I quote is No. 5, and I am satisfied the editor will forgive me

in venturing to give his notes an English circulation as well, where I am sure they will pass current without any discount. The extract has reference to the subject already treated of in this chapter. It is headed, "The Growth of Melbourne—Stones and Souls," and is as follows:—"September 28, 1857.—"This is an age of marvels, and of all the marvellous facts of the nineteenth century, the rapid and solid growth of the colony of Victoria is not the least marvellous. The metropolis is a fair index of her extraordinary development. Two-and-twenty years since this city had no existence, and to-day its inhabitants are tenfold more numerous than the forest-trees they have supplanted. The green sward that was wont to be pressed by the indolent foot of the wild man has disappeared beneath the steady, active, ceaseless tread of the white; and the birds and the beasts that afforded the aboriginal a precarious existence, have fled from the bustle and hum of some hundred thousand workers, who have swarmed from the old hives of civilisation.

"The municipal statistics of Melbourne, which (for the first time) are printed in full detail in our present number, commence with the year of incorporation, 1842. The assessment was made in the first quarter of 1843; there were then 1095 houses, and their total value was estimated at 66,847*l.*, the inhabitants numbering not less than 6000 souls. Year by year the stream of population enlarged, and tenements of course steadily increased. At the end of ten years we find recorded, in the first quarter of 1853, nearly fivefold the number of buildings just now stated. The actual number was 4980, their yearly value being assessed at 638,834*l.* A great change had by this time come over the population. The quiet, plodding spirit of regularly rewarded industry had given way to one of feverish excitement. The gold-fields had been discovered, and men moved hither and

thither, flushed and dizzy with the actual, or hoped for, sudden realisation of wealth. Ere another year had passed, the startling treasure-gains of 1852 had made Victoria world-famous, and there naturally flowed to her ports a huge tide of human existence. The result was, that in one year there were upwards of 4000 additional buildings erected in Melbourne city alone, while in the suburbs canvas and slab, and wattle and dab, sprang up with mushroom rapidity and tropical growth. In the early part of 1854 there were no less than 9175 habitations, containing nearly 54,000 inhabitants; and the yearly value of the dwellings was valued at the enormous amount, for an infant settlement, of 1,553,965*l*. At the beginning of 1855 there were 11,547 edifices to be found in Melbourne, but since that time the two sister municipalities, Emerald Hill and St. Kilda, have left their metropolitan parent, and carried their parting dowry with them; but Melbourne still shows (in 1857) the goodly number of 10,000 dwellings, assessed at an annual value of 900,000*l*. and the population is still somewhere about 50,000 souls.

"In reference to the municipal statistics of Melbourne, there are one or two interesting facts that will further tend to illustrate the progress of Melbourne—as, for instance, the average value of property in each year, and also the actual purchasable value of property in the city of Melbourne. Thus, by taking the number of buildings in each year, and the assessment, we find the average value of each to be as follows:

In 1843	£55	11	0	Average for 10 years, 1843 to 1852, 32*l*. 12*s*.
1844	56	9	4	
1845	19	7	9	
1846	15	10	9	
1847	25	1	7	
1848	25	15	8	
1849	29	18	9	
1850	29	3	4	
1851	33	13	4	
1852	35	7	6	

In 1853.....	£128	5	7	Average for 5 years, 1853 to 1857, 109*l.* 17s. 8d.
1854.....	169	7	4	
1855.....	93	6	8	
1856.....	72	13	2	
1857.....	85	14	7	

"In this table it will be seen that there are three periods, at regular intervals of five years, in which a depreciation in value appears to have taken place—1844-5, 1849-50, 1854-5 (for the assessment being made at the beginning of each year, is a criterion of the progress or retrogression during the preceding one)—but that in 1849 is the least noticeable of the three; that in 1844 is a depreciation of 66 per cent.; and that in 1854 of 45 per cent., with a still further reduction in the years immediately following.

"The greatest proportionate rise in the value seems to have been in 1852-3, when property advanced more than 300 per cent., although the great increase in the number of buildings is not apparent till the next year; and notwithstanding the various fluctuations, the table shows an increase in value of 240 per cent. during the last ten years.

"As the assessed value, for the purpose of rating, averages only about two-thirds of the annual rental of property, we may estimate the latter, in 1843, at 91,270*l.*, while in 1854 it had increased to about 2,330,947*l.*; and as property in Melbourne is worth on an average seven years' purchase, it would give us an actual purchasable value of more than sixteen millions sterling; and in 1857, with a prospect of a continuous rise, by following the same rule, we arrive at a product of nine and a quarter millions as the value of property in Melbourne, even though two portions, St. Kilda and Emerald Hill, have been separated.

"The number of buildings Melbourne would have contained at the present moment, had the rate of increase since 1853

been in the same proportion as previously, would, I imagine, have been about 6600; and had not the above-mentioned portions been detached, there would have been, at the rate of the increase in the last two years, about 11,800 buildings now in Melbourne. This shows that about 5200 buildings (more than the whole number erected during the eleven years 1843 to 1853 inclusive) have been added to Melbourne within the last five years over and above the gradual annual increase.

"As to the appearance of Melbourne, we have not space to do more than allude to the substantial character of the buildings now everywhere to be seen. The age of wood is fast merging into that of stone, and our ancient muddy highways are already petrified under the process of Macadam. Gas has dispelled night-darkness in our streets, the chief of which are ninety-nine feet in width. Water, that was wont to be hawked about from place to place as a precious thing, and scantily meted out in pails and cans at a fabulous price, is now circulating healthily and purely through the great bulk of the metropolis; and even the thirsty streets, when the hot winds come, will no longer lack their daily cool and refreshing draughts."

In this brief but comprehensive glance at the unparalleled rise and progress of Melbourne Proper, the editor of *Facts and Figures* has left altogether out of sight, and never once alluded to, the immense and important wing of the metropolis called Collingwood, which in reality is as much Melbourne as Pimlico is London; for although it has (fortunately for itself) a distinct municipal corporation, it is, strictly speaking, a part and parcel of the city, connected by an unbroken chain of streets and parades, without any river intervening, or any waste suburb separating them. It contained, in

1854, 17,910, and in 1857, 21,885 inhabitants, advancing all the time in its local improvements *pari passu* with the parent city. In the early part of 1849, I saw the great city of San Francisco jump from its cradle, shake off its swaddling-clothes, and precociously assume the aspect of adolescence in the space of twelve months. I then witnessed the great fire which scathlessly singed its white gossamer wings and scarred and shrivelled its weatherboard body; and in the midst of the roaring tempest of smoke and flame I saw a tall Yankee—the personification of the national spirit—endeavouring to nail on the charred door-post of his late establishment a notice "that the Californian Restaurant, burnt out last night, is removed to No. 39, Clay-street," holding his head back during the operation lest a lambent tongue of fire should scorch his long beard. In a similar spirit of enterprise and determination, the whole population laboured and toiled until a new city of much fairer and finer dimensions arose from the embers in a few months. I looked upon the resurrection as a miracle—the event of a lifetime—not to be again equalled in an age; and the Americans themselves, accustomed as they are to extemporised cities, vowed "that it whipped creation," "beat all natur," "and went ahead of the hul worl," christening it, in their "almighty" glorification, "The Queen of the Pacific." But, without growing many years older, I lived to see this northern queen city eclipsed by the superior radiance of a southern metropolis, not arrayed in nails and lumber, or in canvas or corrugated iron, but in bricks and stone, cement and mortar—not run up, either, in a rude utilitarian style, but decorated with all the charms and graces of the chastest orders of architecture, for its very stores, erected for the purposes of trade, much less the great public or corporate

buildings, are chiselled, carved, columned, and corniced in a fashion of ornate but correct finish that would in earnest reality entitle them to be classified with those elaborately got-up edifices in Pall-Mall and St. James's-street in which noblemen and gentlemen become oblivious of their domestic duties and relations. Yes, Melbourne, young as she is, is, without doubt, the overtopping wonder of the world, as well in her stalwart proportions as in her architectural graces.

CHAPTER IV.

The old Post-office—The new one—A City Stroll—Melbourne Costume in 1853—Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité—The Ladies to be seen in Public in these Days—Their Costumes—Their floral and other Ornaments—Their Style of Shopping—A Digger's Gallantry—Melbourne Streets and Trottoirs in 1853—The Difficulties of Locomotion—Hanging up your Horse—Bullock Teams—Irregularity of the Houses—Public-houses—Equality of Sexes at their Bars—The Christian Character of their Signboards—Groups of new Chums—An old Friend in a new Guise—Canvas Town—Benjamin Edgington—His Yankee Competitor—His charitable Instincts—Curiosities of Literature—Mrs. Molony and her sympathetic Neighbours—Danger and Retreat—Emerald Hill—Rent a Residence there—Style of Architecture—Domestic Transparencies—Melbourne Restaurant in 1853—Difficulty about Beds—Night Row—Miraculous Escape—A Melbourne Boniface in 1853—The Digger's Banker—Our first Bed in the Colony.

After parting with my old chum friend and getting the bearings of the Post-office, I bent my steps thither in expectation of finding some letters that should have come forward by a mail which left England subsequent to our departure. I found this important public building represented by a wretched wooden hovel, awkwardly propped up in a filthy quagmire, and surmounted with a clock-tower the exact counterpart of the louvre of a corn-kiln. The clock, in external appearance, was respectable enough, but the frequent and considerable changes made on its dial-plate in the course of each day warranted the idea that the hands required something beyond mechanical agency to keep them in their proper

places. There were two approaches for inquiry, railed off at the immediate approach to the delivering apertures; but as the letters of the alphabet were impartially divided in twain and assigned to each, it followed, as a matter of course, that the aperture to which such unpopular letters as Q, U, V, X, Y, and Z were allotted would be comparatively idle, while the other would be crowded with a column of unintermitting applicants. I belonged to the popular aperture, and found that the transit of a couple of hours only brought me within the railing, when, weary and disgusted, I would have raised the siege, only that I was unwilling to subject myself to the ordeal of the jeering laugh to which every tired-out "lime-juicer," as we new chums were called, was treated on his abdication. In order to while away the remainder of the time, I modestly opened a conversation with the man next me, who was a hirsute giant, attired in a rough, travel-stained drayman's garb. "Yes," he replied, in a mellifluous tone, "this post-office nuisance is a dreadful bore," which convinced me at once he was bred up to a very different occupation. He gave me much useful information, and when it came to his turn, after a considerable lapse, in reply to an injunction from the interior, he said, "Oh, I must sign my name, must I?" when, sticking the cart-whip into the breast of his jumper in a most professional manner, he wrote his name in a fine Roman hand, with hacked fingers which must have been strangers for some weeks to soap and water. This aboriginal post-office was, in 1854, encased in a specious corrugated iron edifice, which, though of a plain, simple exterior, possessed almost all the modern improvements and advantages of similar establishments. But even this commodious edifice is now (1857) doomed to demolition, and a splendid pile is about being erected on the same site, which is the most convenient position that could be chosen.

Leaving the Post-office, I went to make a call on an old-country friend and schoolfellow, but not finding him at home, I went with my fellow-passenger for a stroll of observation. From my Californian experience, I was prepared for many of the strange sights and appearances; not so my companion, who, though what may be called a citizen of the world, could ill suppress his amazement at the scenes he witnessed. To begin at the top: there was not one per cent. of the olden species of hat called bell-toppers. Wide-awakes of sundry shapes, and cabbage-trees of every tint of dirtiness, were the order of the day. Neckties and bare necks were about on a par. Coloured shirts had banished their fair brethren. Coats were nowhere to be seen, shooting-jackets and jumpers monopolising the fashion. Trousers alone held their own, but they were as frequently stuffed inside long jack-boots, or suspended over laced-up water-tights. I only on that day observed one pair of gloves, which were worn by a little purse-proud old chum, but from the way in which he kept his thumb and fingers distended—like a section of wheel-spokes—it was evident he felt as uncomfortable as an aboriginal in tight boots, using his hands when in motion as if he were paddling through the air. The more respectable of the fair sex in these days did not often appear in public, as a sentiment synonymous with the motto, "Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité," was in the ascendant, which, in the infancy of police organisation and the prevalence of lucky diggerism, was frequently evinced in an over-affectionate manner, particularly to the gentler portion of the community. Thus the females we almost invariably encountered were either of that strong-minded class who had caught their diggers *in vinculo matrimonii*, or were anxious to encourage diggers' attentions without the bother or conventional ceremony of forging the chain. These striking but

unattractive women jostled you on the flagways, elbowed you in the shops, and rattled through the streets in carriages hired at a guinea an hour, arrayed in flaunting dresses of the most florid colours, composed of silks, sarcenets, and brocaded satins, which had evidently been manufactured in the infancy of the power-loom, and low-classed, old-fashioned tabinets that had slumbered on the shelves of Dublin warehouses antecedent to the Union, but which now went off swimmingly as "the newest and latest fashions," in exchange for Ballarat nuggets. These women were also addicted to flowers and corn-stalks, and every tribe of those incongruous ornaments which meet in the common ground of a lady's bonnet, paying, as I ascertained, more for a meagre bunch composed of wire, printed calico, and spangles, than would purchase the rarest bouquet of forced flowers in Covent Garden market. Parasols were also a passion of theirs, and the more gaudy the hues the higher the price the shopman could extract. "Prevailing fashion, I assure you, ma'am—patronised by the Empress of France—got out a few just to see how they'd take—only one more left;" and, comical to relate, many of these women were so unaccustomed to their use as often to carry them at the shady side, leaving the sun to beam down on their brazen faces. Nor must I omit noticing the ponderous chains, the corpulent earrings, the handcuffy bracelets, and the wide rings set with curiously-stained glass which they delighted in sporting, purchased for them at prices that would make Storr, or Mortimer, or both together, stare with a gaze of amazement equal to that of King O'Toole's at the conduct of his pet goose. H. and I turned into one of the fashionable shops in Collins-street, where this class and their admirers constituted the majority of the throng, just to witness the style of transacting business. The quantity of money they expended was really fabulous, and afforded a

tolerable earnest of the teeming richness of the land. They never found fault with, or rejected, any article, unless the shopman, in a fit of absence of mind, happened to ask a low figure—about two hundred per cent. above cost price. On this occasion a lady of respectability, who had timidly receded to the end of the shop watching for a lull in the digger demand, now advanced to the counter, and after examining a dress in a manner which showed that she was somewhat of a judge of the fabric, declined it, saying, "It was too expensive;" whereupon a gallant digger, with a Dulcinea on his arm, promptly ordered two to be cut off, and absolutely endeavoured to force them on her as a spontaneous gift. H., being modest, bought a pair of shocking bad gloves, for which he paid 6s. 6d., and we went on our rambles again. It happened, however, that a heavy shower of rain had fallen while we were watching the Victorian Swan and Edgar style of doing business, and not being shod in a suitable manner, we found it both difficult and disagreeable to get along. For in those days the small patches of flagged side-paths in the whole city might have been counted without getting into the teens, and the fine loam with which they were coated soon got from mortar into positive puddle never less than three inches, and very frequently deep enough to reach the top of an ankle-boot; so that, seeing there was no use in mincing or picking our steps, we rolled up the bottoms of our trousers about as high as a Highlander's gaiter, and went straight through it. The streets were in perfect keeping with the trottoirs, being only passable on the central ridge, where a narrow line of thoroughfare was established, partly from the drainage caused by the depression on each side, and partly by a process of macadamisation, which consisted in peppering it over with boulders of rock, that seemed to be precious stones, from the stepmother niggardliness with which they

were distributed. But bad as the track was, woe betide the cart or waggon forced to give way to either side during the wet season, for they immediately became engulphed to the axles, rarely getting extricated without some additional horse or ox power to drag them bodily out of the sludge. Even saddle-horses only managed to get through the margins with extreme difficulty, straggling along like flies over a plate of treacle. I have seen hundreds of instances—five per cent. of them at the door of the great Bank of Australasia—where riders, alighting and hanging up* their horses while transacting business, found the poor animals on their return sunk to their chests in the mire, with their chins patiently resting on the kerbstones. Bullock teams alone seemed capable of pulling through with any degree of steadiness or regularity, and their wild appearance, as well as great preponderance in the main streets of a metropolis, certainly struck the eye of a stranger as a curious novelty.

As we trudged along, the extremely irregular aspect of the city was very noticeable; no two houses in juxtaposition were of the same height or of the same material. Most of the original ones were well built of brick or stone; many of the next crop were composed of weatherboards; and several of the later ones of canvas or corrugated iron. Corner houses were almost invariably selected for licensing, their doors standing directly in the angle, so as to offer an impartial invitation to each street; but, as it appeared to me, there was no need for studying convenience or affording facilities, for customers were so plentiful and so eager they would have mounted on scaling-ladders for nobblers, or gone

* In Melbourne there are posts sunk in the ground almost opposite every door, with rings and latches for affixing the bridles to them; for in early times the Bedouins of the streets were scarce, and latterly they are too expensive to employ. Fastening your horse to one of these posts is termed "hanging him up."

down in buckets for them to the deepest cellars. The bars were always full, the tap-rooms always crowded, and in those resorts, at least, there was no disproportion of the sexes. The women were as numerous as the men, and asserted the equality of their gentle genders by as deep potations, and as blasphemous and obscene vociferations, as their rougher associates. No wonder this trade should prosper in Victoria, as candidates for licenses generally commence business under the patronage of some tutelary saint, and, instead of resorting to unnatural history for red lions and blue boars, or to the farm-yard for black bulls and white horses, they reverently and religiously take up the Calendar, con it carefully over, and pick out some canonised patron distinguished in life for his jollifications as a "holy friar," and under the light of his congenial countenance they court the smiles of Fortune. I remarked one instance where it must have been that the publican, forestalled in all the male saints, placed a kit-cat of a lady saint over his portal, and under it a hand significantly pointing round the corner to a sly-looking door headed "Saint Elizabeth's Tap," as if it was the pet place of resort of that holy lady. While re-reading this original signboard, it struck me that while in Britain saints associated with sublunary pursuits are invariably shorn of their fair proportions and abbreviated to S^{t}, they are awarded their full meed of orthography in Victoria. In passing those corners we remarked groups of new comers, who, like us, were indulging their curiosity; but while they were thus innocently and harmlessly occupied, I could see they were regarded by the old chums with looks of scowling jealousy as interloping intruders come without invitation to diminish their colonial income.

Endeavouring to kill two birds with one stone by combining business with amusement, we turned our steps to-

wards Canvas Town, on the south side of the Yarra, with the intention of selecting a site for a temporary habitation, for, judging from my Californian experience that lodgings would be our earliest and most urgent difficulty, I came provided with an excellent tent and camp apparatus. On going along Swanston-street, gazing at everything internal as well as out of doors, I missed my friend H. from my side, and observing him glancing furtively into a ham and sandwich refectory, I returned a few steps to take a peep at the curiosity, which proved to be a waiter, with an unclean towel astride his arm, hurrying to and fro amongst a mob of clamorous customers. I looked again without being able to detect anything particularly strange, and while I kept looking, my friend kept shaking his head, half in doubt, half in abstraction. At length he informed me that the ministering angel inside was an old acquaintance of his, of excellent family, with whom he parted in Paris the previous October, "being then, as he said, on his way to winter in Rome or Naples, bored to death with London fogs and English society." This was rather a strong dose for a person like H., roughing it himself for the first time in his life. We then jogged along silently across Princess Bridge, absorbed in reverie, until we entered the precincts of the once celebrated but now defunct Canvas Town. Here we were considerably surprised at finding something approaching to regularity in the disposition of the gossamer tenements, for, overlooking it from the high ground on the opposite side of the river, it appeared to be a confused swarm of tents, pitched at random on a hill-side, like a flock of pigeons after a long flight. On the contrary, however, there was a series of streets, not, to be sure, laid out in straight lines, or running parallel to each other, or intersecting at right angles, but yet streets to all intents and purposes, with central thoroughfares, and stores, and habita-

tions on each side; and if fame constituted of wide-spread notoriety contributes to gladden the human heart, Benjamin Edgington, of Duke-street, London, would have been rendered about the happiest of mortals by a stroll through this overgrown hamlet, for nine-tenths of the tents bore the oval mark framing the impress of his name, and a large majority of the tarpaulins used in covering the out-door chattels were likewise distinguished by that stamp. Benjamin Edgington had, however, a few local competitors, and amongst them a slick, go-ahead Yankee, who announced, on a long and deep stripe of calico, that "he was the inventor and sole proprietor of the patent self-erecting tent." We looked in to see the invention, which, though ingenious, and, to a certain extent, self-erecting, afforded no guarantee of stability, for when expanded by inflation it appeared rather disposed to become a "castle in the air" than remain a mundane fixture. After all the trouble of erection and explanation, I deemed it incumbent on me to ask the price, and retreat on the usual plea; however, the demand was so outrageously exorbitant, it relieved me of all feelings of embarrassment. So, ironically complimenting him, foreigner as he was, on his proficiency in opening his mouth as wide as an old colonist, I was about departing, but he detained me, in order to explain "that the iday came into his head at church-time, and being a conscientious man he asked a tall price, and gave half the proceeds to charity." The chief peculiarity in this novel aggregation of human dwellings was that all were devoted to business of one kind or another, some mechanical, some professional, and some menial; and the signs or notifications over the various booths were regular curiosities of literature in their way, both as regards spelling and composition. One occupant was a "sale (sail) maker;" another intimated that "boots were sold (soled) here;" a general merchant supplied

"coffee, reading, and refreshment;" while the person over the way confined himself to "coffee threepence the half pint, bread-and-butter to shuit." An aspirant in the hotel line "had beds to let," but directed inquirers "to the back of the premises;" while a chef de cuisine professed his anxiety to "take in joints for baking." "A lady, in her leisure hours," would make dresses, French fashion, or instruct youth; and Mr. Scott, hairdresser, in a discharged ship galley, "set razors, drew teeth, and bled.—N.B. Mrs. S. made up medicines in his absence." In addition to which, barbers' poles bristled at every salient point; butchers' shops abounded; and if there were no licensed publics in this Rag Fair, the hecatombs of bottles, flasks, and gin jars strewed about, proved to a demonstration that there was a most unlimited, unlicensed consumption of ardent spirits. A presumption otherwise materially strengthened by strong-flavoured personal indications, of which I had unmistakable proof in a masculine countrywoman in the dishabille of a sailor's pea-jacket, who waded across the street to inquire "if it's washin' we wanted." "No, mam," I replied, "we must first find a lodging." "Oh, bedad," says she, "if that's what yer afther, I can fit your knuckle to a T. Look," she continued, pointing to a barrel raised upon sods, "at that fine chimbly; well, thuther side o' that I've a strecher 'll hould yes both at three shillins a night." I managed to decline the proposed accommodation in as gracious a manner as I could put on; but, determined on business of some description, she fell back upon the washing. "Ah, thin, surely," says she, "daycent gentlemen likes yes must have a deal o' washin' afther the voyage, and can't yes give it to an industris woman like me, who only charges ten shillins the dozen?"—"or about four shillings above the usual price," I remarked, in an audible soliloquy; upon which, putting her

hands in the jacket pockets, approaching the attitude to which all voluble women incline in energetic declamation, she apostrophised us in the following vernacular terms: "Sweet bad luck to the pair of yes, ye lousy lime-juicers. It's dirty linen that's too good for the likes of yes. I wouldn't give you a squeeze o' me blue-bag for the money. Maybe yes think I wash for divarshun, and that me wood is laid down to me for thankee, or that I git me wathur for the whistlin'. May the devil purshoe yes out o' the daycent colony, you spalpeens ye." The dulcet tones in which she addressed us evidently penetrated throughout the neighbourhood, for an audience was converging towards us in different directions clad in a hybrid mongrel attire, which suggested the idea that the antipodes, amongst its other natural curiosities, contained human hermaphrodites; but they all proved to be of the gentler sex, the men being out at work for the day. The first on the field was a gaunt lady, standing five feet ten inches, in a pair of big broken Napoleon boots, and crowned with a towering greasy wideawake, which gave her quite the air of a disgraced bandit. "Mrs. Molony, dear," she affectionately exclaimed, "what are these saucy scamps a doin' of, aggervatin' of you in this ways? Who sent for the mean hounds," she promiscuously inquired, "to insult decent women, an their husbans away an earnin' of their livin'? for three strars I would treat each on 'em to a mug of hot water." "And sarve 'em bloody* well right," exclaimed a livid-looking dame, who wore a porous shawl mantilla-wise, to screen a pair of eyes, which, if not boasting dark pupils, moved in the blackest of spheres. During the delivery of these spirited observations, the circle around us

* I must be excused for the frequent use of this odious word in giving colonial dialogues, because general conversation amongst the middle and lower classes at the antipodes is alwsys highly seasoned with it.

became perceptibly diminished, and Mrs. Molony, melting under the influence of the sympathy which her distresses evoked, squeezed a few drops of gin-and-water through her eyelids, receiving them at their confluence under her nose on the cuff of her pea-jacket. This affecting piece of pantomime precipitated the crisis, and only that we were enabled to burst through a weak place in the enceinte, we would have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and Heaven only knows what would have been our fate. Our retreat was the signal for an outburst of yells and screams that would have done credit to a Crow Indian warwhoop, and though there was no pursuit, a cloud of old boots, bottles, stones, and bottomless tin cans was discharged after us, but fell short of the mark. We charged straight across a swamp to the rising ground beyond it, and only ventured to glance round when we placed the morass betwixt us and the Amazons, who were still concentred in a formidable group, regarding their lost prey.

This rising ground was none other than Emerald Hill, christened from the rich verdure with which it is perpetually clothed. At that time it was very sparsely sprinkled with tents, with only one house on its eastern slope. This was a public-house called the Emerald Hotel, fronted with a deep verandah, under which a row of men, in digging costume, were taking their after-dinner smoke. I found, on inquiry, that it was principally resorted by the more respectable and quietly-disposed class of diggers, who, instead of spending their vacation amidst the scenes of riotous, drunken debauchery of Melbourne, came over to board in this quiet, cleanly suburb. I ascertained, moreover, that close by there was a little street of weatherboard houses—the first erected there—and that probably they were not all let, as they were not all thoroughly finished. From the cha-

racter of the neighbourhood I was desirous of securing a temporary resting-place in it, so I hurried across to the new buildings, where I was fortunate enough to find the landlord, and closed, without cavil, for one of the tenements, at the current rate of 4*l.* per week, or 1*l.* per week per room, such as they were. These houses, greedily snapped up at a rent equivalent to 208*l.* per annum, were wretched hovels, roofed with rough shingles, which, although they led off the rain, allowed the wind and light to stream in through their interstices. The same description will suit the sides, on which the boards only overlapped enough to carry down the drip, though it frequently bubbled up in high winds, finding its way into the interior. The partitions were simply constructed of sized long-cloth, which admitted the convenience of conversing with your neighbour without the trouble of leaving your own apartment. The arrangement, however, admitted of this indelicate drawback, that if your candle at bedtime happened to be extinguished first, you might probably be startled by the shadowy phantom of Mrs. or Miss A B C, next door, in her night-dress, preparing for the stretcher. The floors, whether intentionally or not I can't say, were laid somewhat on the hencoop principle, so that all garbage or offal might fall through. I know that some of our knives, forks, and I think a blacking-brush, disappeared through these slender slits, which also admitted such copious currents of wind, that a long-six stearine rarely saw out our evening's repast. In fact, taking them for all and all, it would be considered at home cruelty to animals to use them as dog-kennels, and it would certainly vitiate a policy to force a person whose life you had insured to sleep in one of them for a single night. However, we were as proud and happy as possible in having even a shed in the colony that we could call our own, and we returned to the Emerald

Hotel to thank the host for his information, and drink our first nobblers to the glory and greatness of the "new and happy land." By the directions of the landlord we took a new route to the city, across a watery flat leading to a ferry, where we paid sixpence for a passage, or about the rate of a halfpenny per boat's length. It was now getting duskish, and the day's work gave us a good appetite, which we went to appease in an eating-house in Great Collins-street East, a little below the level of the street. I thought I heard my friend—who was a member of the Wyndham—heave a gentle sigh as, surveying the rough-and-ready dinner apartment, he endeavoured to sidle into a seat opposite me, where we were obliged to dovetail as in an omnibus, the table betwixt us being barely broad enough to sustain the pair of half-wiped plates. We ordered steak and potatoes as the safest dish, and, while waiting for it—as we were not allowed any bread to pick at—we endeavoured to derive edification from the general conversation. One good-natured, communicative man in a jumper, who saw that our attention was directed to his box—moreover perhaps moved by the destitute appearance of our table, which was simply decorated with a single salt and an egg-cup of mustard—jumped up with a bottle and glass, and insisted on our joining him in nobblers. As there might have been danger in declining the intuitive hospitality, we made a virtue of necessity, and swallowed the potions in so clean, off-hand a manner, as to charm the heart of our unknown entertainer, who smiled affectionately, shook our hands vehemently, exclaiming, in guttural ecstasy, "X-cuse me, gemmen—you're town folk—I don't make me money like as you do; I makes mine by fair bloody diggin'." Saying which, he gave the bottle a flourish over his head that sent a shower of brandy about the room.

Our dinner arriving at this juncture, he retired, with a propriety of demeanour scarcely to be expected. But how shall I attempt to describe the meal I have designated a dinner? Each plate contained a calcined lump of meat, which might have been flat in its raw state, but was now shrivelled up into a black ball about the size of the cold potato beside it. Gravy there was none; and so far from there being any succulence about the unsightly cinder, the fork went into it as if it was entering a rusk, causing a shedding of sooty scales about. There was no butter, and there was no use in complaint; we, however, got a bit of gritty bread, and a glass of saccharine ale, as extras; the whole repast costing the small sum of 8s. 6d. As it was now late, and there was no possibility of getting aboard of the ship, even if we escaped being stuck up in the way to Sandridge, we set out in quest of beds. We first went to the Prince of Wales, where, with all the persuasiveness I could call up, I urged our outcast position: "Anything in the shape of a bed would be sufficient;" but the landlord assured me there was neither bed nor sofa, nor any article of furniture that would stand in lieu thereof. He pointed, in proof of his inability to accommodate us, to the preparation then in progress in the little room behind the bar, where the children were being put on chairs in one corner, and a rude bed prepared for himself and his mistress in the other. Such, he declared, were the shifts to which they had been driven for some months, as respectable people could not venture into the second-class houses, in consequence of the scenes which were enacted there. No very hopeful prospect for us. He finally advised us to try the Port Phillip Club Hotel, warning us to keep a sharp look-out, as sticking up was frequent even in the principal streets. To the Port Phillip we went, without better fortune, for the proprietor protested

solemnly that every hearth-rug in the establishment was engaged. He recommended some other hotel, which we were unable to find, as the night was dark and rainy, and the miserable lamps barely afforded sufficient light to guard one from running against the posts on which they were perched. In this extremity we resolved, at all risks, to go into some public-house, get some drink, and manage to eke out the time on chairs or benches until morning. But this resolution was more easily made than carried out. We called at one or two, and found them so crammed with crowds of cut-throat-looking ruffians, evidently acting in concert with parties of abandoned women of still more repulsive appearance who hung about the portals, that any extremity was preferable to such dangerous association. The third house we called at being less crowded, we went forward to the counter, and ventured to order a couple of tumblers of hot toddy into the parlour. "No room inside; so manage to toss it off where you are," said the landlord, impudently. We naturally declined, and were about going away, when the fellow jumped over the counter, got betwixt us and the door in a fighting attitude, and, flanked by two of his barmen, commenced a tirade of abuse: "You'll not come that game over me, you pair of bloody duffers. Come, pay your money, and then go to h——, if you like." The row brought a mob of drunken men and women from the room, all of whom, individually and collectively, expressed their anxiety to adopt the host's quarrel, and "lamb us," without inquiry, while at the same time an out-door reinforcement assembled, as the Crimean correspondent would say, "with the light of battle in their faces," for the landlords of public-houses could then always rely on a loyal muster of rowdy scoundrels against any foe, but particularly a "lime-juicer." Matters looked threatening, and it appeared we

were about assuming colonial livery—black eyes and bloody noses. But, as the saying is, "the darkest hour is that before dawn," so at the moment when our doom looked most imminent, our deliverance was at hand. "Robbery! Murder! Robbery!" roared a man outside, which led to a rush and a street-scuffle that quite emptied the bar. At this juncture, a voice in tones of friendliness called softly, "This way, as you value your lives!" On looking round, we discovered an interesting young woman standing inside the counter, with the hinged part raised, beckoning us to come hurriedly through. She then led us to a side-door, and bade us follow the narrow street to the right, until we got to the wide one at the end. This proved to be Elizabeth-street, at its junction with the west end of Flinder's-lane, and close by the corner stood another public, with a quiet air, filled by a group of new comers inside, holding little bundles or bags in their hands. We joined them, in the hopeful anticipation that they had secured quarters; but we were met on the threshold by the verdict of disappointment: "No room, nor no accommodation at no price." "Be so good," entreated a delicate young man, "as permit me to leave my carpet-bag until morning?" "No room, I tell you, for either baggage or passengers, if you paid a guinea an inch for it," replied the antipodean Boniface. Hotel-keepers, in those days, made no secret of their contempt for mere night-lodgers, or new chums who came to pile up money; they courted the custom of old chum diggers, who delighted in knocking it down, and that class then not only abounded in numbers, but abounded in gold. Townships had not as yet been established on the different diggings, and licensed houses were few. Digging theatres or concert-rooms had not been started, nor any other species of local entertainment or amusement; so that lucky diggers, "up for a

spree," as they called it, intent on making oblations to propitious Fortune, came down to the capital, many of them making those vampire publicans their bankers, and remaining in town until their accounts came to be overdrawn—a consummation which arrived with bewildering rapidity under the system of double entry practised by these licensed worthies, who then turned out the digger with the same indignity they would a "lime-juicer." No wonder, then, that we could not find quarters; and under the suggestion of one of the strangers, we were about adjourning in a body to the police-station, and asking permission to remain in the guard-house till morning, when a member of that force appeared, to give warning that the closing hour had arrived. We stated our case to this functionary, who was good enough to say "he thought he could find us accommodation in a public lately opened, and not yet in brisk business," and he accordingly conducted us a considerable distance, through mud and dangerous water-holes, up the eastern end of Flinder's-street, to the Duke of Wellington, where at length we found shelter, but no softer bed than the dining-room table, on which we had our maiden dreams in the veritable El Dorado.

CHAPTER V.

Visit the Ship for the last Time—Williamstown Boatmen—Sandridge Porters—Uniform Charge of One Guinea—Seizure of our surplus Stores—Commence Housekeeping—New Allies—Woman's Skill in Domestic Economy—Household Arrangements—Our Neighbours—Colonial Mode of getting into the next House—Digger City Life—Female Relaxations—Division of Labour—The Victorian Panacea—A Ramble on Emerald Hill—The Multitude of Dental Surgeons—The Druggist's Shop—The Druggist's Suggestion—Diploma for Sale—The Druggist's Description of Colonial M.D.s and Chemicals—View from the Hill—Meet unexpectedly a Legal Friend—His Garb—His Dwelling—His Sketch of the Profession—First Evening at Home.

THE following morning we were astir early, our couches having no attraction, and being anxious, moreover, to catch the first downward trip of the *Flying Fish*, in order to pay our parting visit to the ship and get our luggage ashore. At Williamstown we paused for a period on the pier, in expectation of the captain's coming on shore, when we could secure a return passage. But we paid for our parsimony, for the cormorant boatmen, divining our motives, talked and sneered at us in so unmerciful a manner, that we reluctantly chartered a craft at the small charge of one guinea to escape the verbal torture.

We were fortunate enough to find the captain on board, and he kindly lent us a boat and crew to land our goods and chattels, much to the disgust of the water-harpies, who calculated on a thumping freight. On landing at Sandridge, I

left H. in charge, and proceeded to hire a horse and dray at the cost of a guinea, though the distance to our new residence was very little over a mile, and, as a matter of course, I expected the drayman to assist in carrying the luggage from the end of the pier. That functionary, however, entertained quite a different opinion, for, in reply to my demand, he said, "Yes, I'll help you when you get it here"—a resolution which, I believe, he acted upon, not, perhaps, so much for his own ease as from a wholesome apprehension of interfering with the callings of the other industrious sharks, who were lying in wait all around for their special victims.

Turning quite as much in wonder as disgust at the style and cost of doing business in the "new and happy land," I was accosted by a sort of sailor porter, with a truck, who volunteered "to trundle our plunder" to the cart for the small but uniform sum of one guinea, which seemed to be the prevailing tariff for all jobs. However, we declined his services, as well as those of several other volunteers without trucks, and commenced operations ourselves, H. and my brother taking the smaller, while I shouldered the heavier articles, amongst which were a few three-dozen cases of Bordeaux, one of champagne, and one of brandy—surplus stores, which the pilot said we would be allowed to take with us without paying duty. It is needless to add that we were ironically complimented by the disappointed harpies on the pier for the style in which we bent to our work; and I think I would be doing them no more than justice in attributing to them the honour of a visit from a Customs official who had just arrived from Melbourne, and who relieved us of our wines and spirits, giving us to understand that we were to consider ourselves under serious obligations to him for not confiscating our entire luggage. Arrived at our castle, my mates (the fashionable colonial term) employed themselves dis-

posing our scant furniture, and I went and purchased a small load of green firewood for 3*l.* 10s., a small barrel of water for 7s. 6d., and some other household necessaries at equally remarkable prices. While making my marketing, I was fortunate enough to encounter a decent married couple with a grown-up child, who were in quest of a room or two to lodge in, and, after a brief conference and reciprocal explanations, it was agreed between us that they should have a room free, with the use of the kitchen, if the woman undertook the housekeeping. This bargain was most gladly ratified by H. and my brother, who had been making futile experiments in the science of fire-lighting during my absence, and appeared rather disconsolate at the dim and distant prospect of dinner. Our new male ally returned to town for his baggage, and Mrs. W. set about her peculiar duties in a most cheerful manner, which soon imparted a hopeful aspect to our domestic affairs. It is really wonderful what the quick eye, the light touch, and provident tact of woman can accomplish in a household with even the slenderest stock of materials. A dish with a sunburst of plates, a few cups and saucers arranged in fantastic groups, a simple cullender, a glass salt and tin pepper-caster in anomalous positions, under her facile fingers invests a deal dresser with charms analogous to those of a sideboard surmounted with its buffet. The naked, cold hearth, too, assumes a tinge of the dear fireside aspect, with its kettle, polished above the smoke line, simmering on the stove, the well-scoured flesh-fork and frying-pan hanging on either side, and the burnished fire-irons leaning familiarly against the rough mantel-post. Then, again, it is positively incomprehensible to witness the transmutation a naked room will assume under an equally simple and inexpensive process. A lumbering box, "not wanted on the voyage," looks quite debonair, plainly draped in printed

calico. The military chest of drawers does duty becomingly as a chiffonier under a large white napkin, decorated with a cheap work-box, a scarlet pin-cushion, a few reels of cotton, and two blue sal-volatile bottles. The extemporised table looks quite distingué robed in a figured cotton cloth, which serves by night as a counterpane; while the dull, cold, cheerless window, under the loop of a fancy shawl, laterally hung with its deep fringes, and petticoated with a remnant of muslin, evokes the spirit, if not the substance, of comfort and coziness. Yes,

> Dear woman we can't do without you,
> Whether good-humoured or coy,

and it is really hard to conjecture what would have been the issue of our first essay at colonial housekeeping if we were left to our own unaided resources; for, somehow or other, with all my prairie experience and long apprenticeship to tent life, I felt abroad in my efforts to do semi-civilised life on Emerald Hill.

Our neighbours were for the most part new chums, with only an old colonial auctioneer and his family on the one side of the street, and a lucky digger, with a city wife, our next door neighbours, on the other. The auctioneer was constituted agent by the proprietor, and collected the rents weekly in advance—an occupation which he might readily have got through on each occasion in half an hour, but over which he invariably spent an entire day, as each receipt was ratified with a series of nobblers which sometimes necessitated him to have recourse to a succession of siestas before he could complete his round. The transaction of business with our digger neighbour was always protracted, and most generally uproarious; so that, in the order of rotation, our rent, in nine cases out of ten, was paid over while Mr. ——, according to his own admission, was "rather tight." I re-

member that on one occasion, in a tipsy lurch, he subsided from the box, "not wanted on the voyage," into the next house, through the sized long-cloth, and when he got upon his legs he endeavoured to assume the same self-possession as if he made his entrée through the door with a profound bow. After an intimacy of a few weeks, I presumed to remonstrate with him about the strength of his habits, but he justified his propensity by informing me "that neat brandy was such an old enemy of his family, whenever he laid hands on it he showed it no mercy." The digger and his wife were out of sight of the leaders of our circle. They had their evenings at home, and every day about noon a town clarence and pair drew up in the mud opposite their door, in which they took suburban airings, finishing up with a round of shopping at the favourite city taps, where they generally picked up some beery acquaintances, whom they brought home to the Hill for a strong tea, and sent back in the return coach, as soon as drunkenness supervened, to be delivered anywhere on the north side of Prince's Bridge. These jaunts cost them, on an average, at least five guineas a day. The days when the digger had a sick headache, and his lady for a little relaxation condescended to "get up a few of her light things," she always dressed for the washing-tub. Tying her long hair in a hard knot at the back of her head, and transfixing it with a huge gold pin with a father-o'-pearl head, she would then shake off her loose morning robe, and, having disengaged the body, get into the skirts of a satin dress, only slightly mottled with punch and mustard stains, but nevertheless protected from suds spatters by a thick bandana cut into the form of a stomacher apron, concluding her toilet by clasping on a pair of massive bracelets, throwing a heavy watch-chain over her neck, and stuffing a carved timepiece into her virtuous bosom. Thus arrayed, I presume, to show

her neighbours that she did not wash for filthy lucre or contemptible economy, but only as a colonial substitute for crochet-work. I am aware that this sketch may appear overdrawn and over-coloured by the home reader, but I am equally satisfied that any one of early colonial experience has frequently witnessed scenes and occurrences fully as whimsical and outré; and I solemnly declare that I have more than one dozen times seen the lady in question up to her elbows in soap-lather, attired literally in the costume I have endeavoured to describe.

Our first afternoon was by no means as dull and tedious as might have been expected. Looking up our things, and exhuming those likely to be soon required, was not a disagreeable task for me and my brother; nor was the rigging up of lines in the rear, to air them, attended with either labour or tedium. I revived some of my backwoodsman's experience, by chopping up small wood and digging a channel to carry off a pool of water which was inclined to nestle under the stove, hissing and spitting steam angrily as hot embers dropped through the slits. Mrs. W. borrowed a huge tin, and got a beefsteak-pie under weigh, and Mr. W. returned early, having, in the exuberance of his satisfaction—at finding a decent domicile—laden himself with a curious variety of condiments, balancing the packet in which they were stored with that great colonial restorative in worldly disappointments, that antipodean elixir efficacious alike for healing enmities or ripening friendships, that Victorian panacea for all the "ills that flesh is heir to," a well capsuled flask-bottle of Martel's brandy.

Having finished my self-imposed task, finding it was too late for going into town, I set out for a stroll in the neighbourhood, taking out as a bosom friend and companion a small revolver, as "sticking up" was quite common even in

the mid-day in unfrequented places. I incline, however, to the belief that the majority of cases were perpetrated on drunken people, palpably incapable of offering any resistance, and that the smaller moiety were magnified from the rifling of prostitutes into the bloody robberies of sanguinary bush-rangers. Emerald Hill, in May, 1853, was a pleasing green, undulating eminence, without a single stone or brick edifice, and scarcely a dozen constructed of weatherboards. There were some few framed tenements covered with canvas, and a few common tents set up here and there on the great ground map of the future town, the lineaments of which were cut out in the sod, stretching away north and south, east and west, much further than the eye could reach. The tents there differed widely from those in Canvas Town, being neater and newer-looking, and the people inhabiting them were evidently a better and more orderly class. There was, comparatively, little squalor about them, and where there was a signboard, it was properly spelled. The only peculiarity I noticed was, that wherever I observed a business placard it invariably ended with a postscript, announcing that "teeth were extracted inside," some "safely," others "expeditiously," but all "cheaply," on all of which points, especially the latter, I entertained strong doubts; but the universality of the advertisement impressed me with the idea that some epidemic destructive of those agents of mastication was prevalent in the colony. I could not help stopping to admire the druggist's little shop; it was so trim and bright and dustless, and so attractively arranged, that I wagered with myself there was a lady in the establishment. It was very small, not more than six feet square in the clear, and about as many high, built of weatherboards, in front of a tent, which constituted the household. Within, it looked as if three of its sides were dry-built, or compounded of drugs and chemicals

contained in the multifarious fixed and movable articles of shop furniture ranged around. There was a basement of boards lettered and painted to resemble drawers, only wanting the representative knobs for pulling them out; upon this rested two courses of round white enamelled jars, neatly labelled in gold letters on a black ground; above them rose three graduated tiers of flint bottles of various hues, with glass stoppers; then came a nice line of seidlitz powders in pasteboard boxes, all surmounted by a light cornice of small ointment pots and empty pill-boxes. The window, which occupied two-thirds of the front, contained in its centre one of the usual large globular bottles, filled with a liquid to match the emerald verdure of the Hill; on either side of it stood two white jars marked "leeches," in plain black letters, one with its lid on, the other battened down with a piece of strained linen to show it was inhabited. The intervening spaces were improved by two crescents of pomade pots, bearing the distinctive appellations of "Genuine Bear's Grease," and "Balm of Columbia." Exactly beneath the large green bottle was a portable soda-water font, encased in wicker, flanked by a truss of new invention and a suspensory bandage of immemorial pattern. The inclined plane at the back was tastefully laid out in a parterre of patent medicines, in their party-coloured envelopes; while at the extreme back were two bundles of "real Havannahs," in yellow ties, a square cheese of "bird's-eye tobacco," and half a dozen meerschaum pipes with amber mouthpieces, which, though apparently out of place, it appears were justified by the usages of colonial trade.

I was unable to resist the temptation of going inside on the pretext of taking a seidlitz powder, and the proprietor received me with a degree of astonished politeness as if I were his first customer: "Seidlitz powder, sir? most certainly, sir.

Just in time from that cold shower, sir. Strange country this, sir; winter in the middle of summer, sir." While weighing the ingredients, for he did not break a box, I remarked on the internal arrangements, which were simply a nine-inch board covered with oil-cloth and skirted with green baize, in lieu of a counter; the half of an old mahogany writing-case represented a desk; an egg-cup of gum-water with a feather end, a small pestle and mortar, a pair of box scales, a penny ball of thin twine, and a lucifer-match box, completed the furniture. As there was no apparent aperture in the back of the tiny shop, I naturally supposed that the little druggist would have been constrained to dive under the counter in going round to the tent at meal times, but I was completely out in my conjecture, for when the Rochelle and soda were duly apportioned, he asked, through an auger hole, for a glass of water and a spoon, and in less than a minute one-third of the back of the shop gaped sufficiently to exhibit a pretty young woman, with a lavender coloured baby in her arms, and the required glass and spoon in her hand. The little druggist was quite pleased at my admiration, and explained the arrangement—"entirely his own idea;" and not having the "tincture of ginger" on the premises, he suggested a few drops of the "United Vineyard" in the draught. He took advantage of the shower to inform me that he paid 10s. per week for the stand, under terms to quit at six clear days' notice. He told me that his prospects were "decent," but were somewhat damped by the premature death of the M.D. of the Hill, who "slipped through in delirium tremens." This brought to his mind the written advertisement that had parted from its wafers in the window, which he picked up as a happy thought, and placed in my hand with an expression of face capable of being translated into "the very thing for an intelligent new

chum; it will suit you down to the ground," watching me narrowly while I read as follows:

> To be disposed of, on Moderate Terms,
> The first class Dublin Diploma of the late Dr. T——r.
> Apply to his disconsolate widow at the old Surgery
> in the Tent next the European National Restaurant,
> Clarendon Street,
> Emerald Hill.

Glancing my eye from the paper to the little druggist, as he thought inquiringly, he quickly asked me, "Would you like to find out the tent, sir?" But was somewhat taken aback on my asking him in return, "For what purpose?" He, however, eventually admitted "that, in his opinion, a tolerably smart man, of good address and general knowledge, with a smattering of Latin, would make a fair average colonial doctor, as the country being new it was not troubled with any dangerous variety of diseases beyond dysentery, opthalmia, rheumatics, and a few of a secret type; now and then," he added, "a bad lying-in case occurs, but as the midwife is held responsible, the doctor need not be uneasy about the consequences." As further encouragement, "he assured me that there were several doctors and surgeons in and about Melbourne, in full practice, who never attended a lecture or smelt a subject, and more than one who compounded his own medicines, because he could not write a prescription." He also enlightened me concerning the genuineness of colonial drugs and chemicals, all of which, saving and excepting his own small stock, selected by himself and packed under his own eye, "had crossed the line as often as he had fingers and thumbs—ships' stores, the scrapings of old medicine-chests, quinine with as much tonic property as arrowroot; blistering ointment as harmless as Windsor-soap, and everything else equally deteriorated by age, adulteration, and exposure. I enjoyed my gossip with the little

druggist, and bid him good evening, with the full intention of paying him an afternoon's visit now and then.

I thence directed my course to the apex of the Hill, which commanded a fine view of the shipping in the bay and the nascent suburb of St. Kilda, of Sandridge, Williamstown, Footscrag, the southern slope of Melbourne, and the summit range of Collingwood. Heading back in the direction of the beefsteak pie, I passed a dilapidated booth-tent ticketed with a large square of pasteboard, containing the following inscription:

MR. C——s P——,
Solicitor, Proctor, and Conveyancer,
Office, No. —, Chancery Lane,
Melbourne.

Here was a coincidence. Could this be my young friend of the same name? No, no; I never heard him express an intention of throwing up a fair Dublin business and emigrating to Australia. True, it was over a year since I saw him, and many unexpected events occur within a twelvemonth. Stranger things often come to pass, however. During this soliloquy I detected the sharp edge of a profile peeping from behind the entrance fold of the tent, and presently, in a burst of recognition as if a film had fallen from his vision, the very man *in propriâ personâ*, but in a remarkably dishevelled condition, rushed out to welcome me to Australia Felix. He shook me by the hand with a vigorous tremulousness which argued a stutter in the wrist, and looked at me with an unsteady glistening stare, of which he seemed to be conscious, for he told me "he was still shaking off the dregs of a colonial fever." Of course I went inside, and of course the aspect of the interior was in keeping with the attire of the major-domo. He anticipated any remark about the general nakedness of the apartment, by informing me that he merely used it for sleeping, as he boarded with the

respectable family in the next tent, who were people of excellent family, and did the thing in good style. The proximate cause, he told me, of his emigration, "was the infernal Encumbered Estates Bill, which drove all the old families to ruin, and destroyed his profession. He was deprived of three hereditary receiverships under the Court of Chancery, which had been in the family for years upon years, and brought business enough for his father's office and his own; and the paltry squibs of new litigation, which mostly went off at a single hearing, were not enough to pay poor-rates."

P—— had come to the colony at a good juncture, when solicitors were scarce, business brisk, and money plentiful. He was doing a first-rate stroke when he got the first fit of colonial fever, which, it appears, is a dogged foe returning again and again to the attack. "An ordinary criminal case," he assured me, "was a good year's income, for a cut-throat-looking client in ragged apparel, by a simple surgical operation on his waistband, would half fill his hat with gold-dust, or extract from behind a patch on his coat a flake of fifty-pound notes that would paper a room—the one got on the gold-fields, the other on the highways. If there was an acquittal—which, *for the sake of society*, was not generally desiderated—the enfranchised culprit rarely waited to enforce the striking of a balance; and if justice overtook him, there was rarely an heir, administrator, or assignee to demand a taxation of costs. Thus all the plunder remained with the solicitor." He talked slightingly of civil business, as men in trade allowed no margin to professionals; but he dwelt with unction on insolvency practice, which he designated "tip-top work"—a game which, by "a little mutual dexterity, could be dealt with according to the pulse of the estate;" and though the business was light and simple, the costs were in the inverse ratio—the "copper currency of the

colony being exclusively confined to the payment of dividends, from the extreme liberality of the taxing system." A similar spirit, he assured me, prevailed in the granting of certificates, which he exemplified by a reference to his last case, where the insolvent returned: "Liabilities, 5319*l.* 11s. 3d.; assets, 29*l.* 6s. 6d.; causes of insolvency, having accepted accommodation bills;" yet he obtained him a first-class certificate, "although it came out on the cross that he never paid one of the accommodation acceptances."

I was obliged, from the lateness of the hour, to deny myself the instruction and amusement of listening to the citation of many more legal cases and anecdotes; but as he promised to look in now and then of an evening, I made sure the treasure was in store for me. He followed me fifty yards, to say he would not be in his office in Chancery-lane until Monday, as I would see by the notice on the door that "he was in Geelong on business of importance;" underlining the information with a prolonged wink. I found my domestic circle rather out of sorts, and even Mrs. W. under a passing cloud at having her first essay at cooking jeopardised by my overstaying the hour. But the pie was excellent, and the brandy as good in its way; while the little stove became red hot, and warmed up the house in spite of the raw weather outside, so that the evening slipped over as agreeably as could be rationally expected. The programme for the next day was —H. to call on two barrister friends and decide betwixt the diggings and the bar; my brother to see if the lighter with his goods was reported, and to look after a place of business; and I made up my mind to call on an old friend, and then take the round of the Horse Bazaars to try and pick up a good hack to carry me on a tour of the gold-fields.

CHAPTER VI.

Heavy Rain—New Mode of Ferrying—A short Morning's Earnings—Morning Levee at an M.D.'s—Aspect of the Surgery—Quality of the Patients—Mistresses and Servants—Nonchalance of Servant-girlism—Groom's Duties—Wild Sports of the West in Great Bourke-street—Composition of the Frequenters of that Locality—Price of Victorian Oysters—A Glance at the Auction Marts—Abandon my Equestrian Ideas—Auctioneers' Profits—Horse planting—Estimate of Horse Keep—Encounter an English Turfite late from the Levant—His Antipodean Ideas—The Bull and Mouth—The Goings-on there—The Profits—The Atmosphere—The prevailing Notions about Drinking—Fish, Fowl, and Vegetables—Truant Hen—The County Court—Style of Practice—Auction Marts for Merchandise—House Rent—Big Clarke—Fortunes made under Constraint—Instance given—Break up the Emerald Hill Establishment.

THERE was a very heavy fall of rain throughout the night, and next morning, in attempting to cross the cricket-ground to the ferry, on our way to the city, we got half-leg deep in the edge of a wide drain, which compelled us to retrace our steps, and go round by Prince's Bridge. But here again we were confronted by a formidable obstacle, caused by a quick dip in the half-made road, through which the rising waters were rushing with the velocity of a mill-sluice. One or two fast fellows in thigh boots attempted fording it without success, and as every minute brought up some fresh persons bound for Melbourne, there was a considerable congregation at the expiration of a quarter of an hour, without any improvement in the prospect of getting over the torrent, so that a large section were on the eve of returning to the

Hill and to Sandridge, when the quick eye of a wood-carrier descried our helpless situation from the bridge. With colonial intuitiveness, he saw his way to a smart morning job, and throwing his load by the road-side he came to our relief, his terms being 1s. per head for the passage. No one demurred or hesitated, and as I did not happen to get amongst the first or second batch, I amused myself in computing his earnings. There were sixty-seven people all told, realising the sum of 3*l.* 7*s.* for an occupation of some five-and-twenty minutes, and so far from evincing any emotions of thankfulness on the occasion, he declared "we were a bloody rubbishy gang of lime-juicers" for not remaining and helping him to reload.

According to arrangement, "we three" parted on our several avocations. I went to call on my friend, a medical man, whom I found encircled by a morning levee of motley-looking patients, none of them, that I heard, complaining of internal maladies, but all of them exhibiting surface indications of their afflictions. Here, again, I had evidence tending to refute the complaint of any inequality of the sexes, for both seemed to muster in pretty equal proportions. Leeches and diachylon were the sanitary agents most in requisition, and if a stranger looked over the floor before surveying the remainder of the apartment, he would come to the conclusion it was a barber's shop, from the numerous long locks and stubbly patches of hair which were strewed around the operating chairs. From the number of fresh patients constantly arriving, my friend asked me to go inside and announce myself to the family, as he did not expect a respite until the mayor's court rose, for it appeared that these numerous and profitable morning calls were all comprised of the lock-ups of the previous night, come to undergo repairs after their fines and liberation.

I here ascertained that though matters were just then getting easier in the domestic and household world, mistresses were still obliged to do a portion of the drudgery—something, too, beyond the light pastry-making, and the Italian ironing of their own frills and ruffles. The waiting-maid, I observed, had much more the air of a lady's companion than a regular servant, attending table as if she were doing extraordinary duty for the nonce, and, as I understood, "on doing up the parlour after luncheon," if so inclined, went out to shop, or make calls, without the embarrassing ceremony of asking permission. If mildly remonstrated with for not being home in time to prepare for dinner, it was then the invariable custom of well-bred servants to give immediate notice; and Miss M. assured me a lady friend of hers, on ringing for "Mary" to say that "a few friends were coming to tea this evening," was sulkily reproved by that obedient domestic for not giving earlier notice, "as she, too, had an express engagement for the entire afternoon." I was present myself the next day when the doctor's groom, whose wages were at the rate of 80*l.* per annum, together with keep, refused to take a cart down town for a few bags of bran, declaring "it was no part of his duty," and there was no alternative but to submit to this menial tyranny, for it took perhaps weeks to secure an equally expensive and impudent substitute.

All the horse and cattle-yards were then, and still are, clustered in the western hill of Great Bourke-street, lately depicted in Melbourne *Punch* as the district of "The Wild Sports of the West." A pedestrian who in those days ventured into that street would have had as little chance of escape as an amateur campaigner who hazarded a crossing during the Balaklava charge, for what with mobs of wild colts and herds of mad cattle fresh from the Bush, driven

frantically backwards and forwards by yelling stockriders, endeavouring to force them into the various auction marts in the teeth of other mobs and herds rushing out of those zoological emporiums; what with crowds of half-broken horses under trial in harness, interspersed with buckjumpers under saddle, and plunging brutes in the lunge, all weaving unravellable bird-cradles of reins, ropes, and traces, only to be rent in fragments by stolid bullock teams, charging under the thongs and curses of their semi-civilised drivers, into shattering collision with training-breaks and straggling tandems; while seas of deranged sheep, broken into isolation, were all the time bounding up in the midst like patches of foam in a maëlstrom,—this western hill of Great Bourke was caviare to the multitude, only wanting a sprinkling of camels, dromedaries, and elephants to render the chaos perfect and inimitable.

On my way up from Elizabeth-street to Bear's-yard, at the corner of Queen-street, I was in a constant state of wholesome apprehension, and was frequently carried, with my own consent, by the reflux of the populace, into the lower end of some shop or tavern. The populace, I should remark, were composed, for the most part, of men from the country in jumpers and cabbage-tree hats, big boots, and stumpy spurs, prowling team dealers in the slang casts-off of London livery grooms, bullock punchers with their long-handled, and stockriders with their short-handled, scourges, auctioneers' touts, with a sprinkling of second-class squatters, and lucky diggers, all either vomiting smoke or swallowing brandy. I ploughed my way with difficulty to the yard, in which I was told I would be most likely to suit myself, but entrance was out of the question—the London Docks were never more closely jammed with ships than it was with horse and bullock teams in its wider area, or with carts, colts,

horses, and mares in the other division, the space about the oblong sale shed being so closely packed with buyers and sellers that when a highest bidder was called upon for a deposit, he could rarely get his hand out of his pocket without waiting an undulation of the throng. I stood for some time outside, in the lower part of the railing, and while gaining a slight knowledge of the state of the horse market, I had also an opportunity of learning the price of Victorian oysters, as along the footpath fronting the yard on the Bourke-street side, there was a close row of hand-carts and portable stalls piled with cones of this fish, of a small and flabby kind, which, however, found eager customers at 3s. 6d. per dozen, with a dash of dirty vinegar and macadamised pepper in.

After a considerable delay, watching for an opportunity, I got across the street to another mart, more in the horse line—M'Caw and Austin's—where I saw some magnificent Van Diemen's Land draught horses selling at prices varying from 180*l.* to 220*l.*, some neat harness horses from 75*l.* to 100*l.*, but as there were not any saddle horses on the day's sale list, I moved a little lower down to Watson's, late Kirk's, a yard exclusively confined to horse sales, the head-quarters of the sporting characters of the colony, so that nags in any shape, from the race-horse to the road hack, were sure to be found there. As good luck ordered it, I was recognised by a Mr. C., a young Scotch gentleman who came out to the colony in 1847, and was then part proprietor of a station in the Wimmera, where he gained a host of general experience, which he placed at my service. After learning the programme of my immediate project, he strongly dissuaded me from purchasing a horse, as it would require a considerable outlay to begin with, entailing, besides, a very heavy daily expense—for a short time only, as the animal

would be either stolen or planted* within a week, and even if I proved fortunate enough to preserve him, his keep, on my contemplated tour, would very soon exceed his cost, as the rate of livery in the diggings districts was two guineas a night. His advice was to travel with my walking-stick and revolver, without any change but a pair of socks, as the other coarse things that I might require from time to time could be had in the gold-fields, and should they cost a little extra, it would be better to rest satisfied than submit to the expense and inconvenience of having a valise hawked about the country. I at once adopted his counsel, which was not only sound and economical, but more to my taste, as it left me free from anxiety, and wholly unencumbered, to rove and remain wherever I thought it most likely to glean information.

He then enlightened me on the business of auction marts for the sale of horses and working oxen, which shows the facility with which fortunes can be accumulated in that calling. The rules are to pay 5s. when the animal is entered on the sale list of the day, and after the sale the purchaser pays ten per cent. for a guarantee that it is not a stolen one, while the vendor has ten per cent. deducted from the purchase-money as a commission. The entrance fees, it is computed, pay the yard expenses of the day, so that the twenty per cent. goes as clear gain into the auctioneer's pocket. Messrs. Bear and Son, in 1853 and 1854, very frequently disposed of over 5000*l.* of stock in a day's sale, and it would be rather understating their daily average to place it at 3000*l.*, which, however, would produce an income of 600*l.* per day, 3600*l.* per week, or 187,200*l.* per annum, from this one branch of their business alone. The other auction marts,

* Planting is a branch of colonial horse traffic, which consists in first stealing a horse, and, as soon as the reward for his recovery is offered, planting or placing him in a place where the thief pretends to have found him accidentally.

taking one with another, might be safely set down at about one-third Messrs. Bears' average, which, however, realised yearly aggregates compared to which those of Mr. Tattersall, Aldridge, or the proprietor of the Barbican, would look very small indeed. There is another class of auctioneers and salesmen who make prodigious incomes from the sale of fat and store cattle, and sheep and stations, but, as they sell in lump or lots, they only charge five per cent.—a pretty smart charge, too, on the sale of a station carrying forty thousand sheep, which is negotiated during a very brief morning's interview, leaving the afternoon for the sales of fat cattle, where the great master butchers buy up the lots, however large. The aggregate sales of the three principal firms, Messrs. Power and Rutherford, Row and Golsborough, Kaye and Butchart, sometimes exceed 20,000*l.* for fat and store cattle. All got through in the space of an hour, the vendor, paying the commission of five per cent., either taking the acceptance of the firm at three months, or cash less the discount, the purchaser paying cash on delivery, or an approved bill at three months, including discount—an arrangement, working with a double purchase, fully equivalent to an additional five per cent. commission.

As a colonial curiosity, Mr. C——m computed in the fly-leaf of his pocket-book the expense of keeping a horse at that period, and I annex the figures correctly copied:

	£	s.	d.
Hay, at 40*l.* per ton, 10lb. per day at 4½d., 3s. 9d., or per year	68	8	9
Oats, at 20s. per bushel (very low), 14lb. per day, 7s., or per year	127	15	0
Straw, at 15s. per cwt., 1½ ton for a year's consumption	22	10	0
Shoeing, at 30s. per set, removing 15s., per year	27	0	0
Groom's wages 80*l.*, keep 30*l.*	120	0	0
Stable rent	25	0	0
Stable furniture, veterinary, &c.	5	0	0
Saddles, bridles, whips, spurs, &c.	10	0	0
Interest, at 10 per cent., on cost of horse	10	0	0
	415	13	9

Only 15*l.* odd above the "competence" prayed for by a maiden lady of respectability, who, to prevent a misunderstanding of her orisons, informed the lord that she meant 400*l.* a year paid quarterly.

While in conversation with Mr. C——m, we were backed into a heap in amongst some empty vehicles by the rearing and plunging of an unbroken colt, about being brought up to the pulpit. I was thrown off my legs rather heavily on a gentleman who was completely prostrate, and on getting into a position to apologise, I recognised a fast turf amateur who was missed from the "sweet, shady side of Pall-Mall" after Teddington's Derby victory. He recognised me at the same moment, and, although in the old country we were only known to each other slightly, he grasped my hand in a frenzy of delight on recovering to a sitting posture, which enabled me to pull him to his legs, when he again repeated the shake, exclaiming, "Bless my soul, who could have thought of seeing you here! Come out to write something smart about the country, eh? like your Californian Excursion. Deuced extraordinary place—capital for a change, excellent for a visitor, but horrid for what they call a lifer. People say everything here is topsy-turvy, but it appears to me that falling-due bills cause a sensation precisely similar to that in the old country. One, however, has somewhat of a pull, for they don't require stamps, which tell up confoundedly in renewals. Had at one time a notion of trying the diggings for a lark, but am now determined to reserve myself for Government, and lend a hand whenever it is hard up. Will take you to my little place in Prahran one of these days, when I get settled, but only moved in yesterday. See you here to-morrow at sale time. Good-by for the present."

Mr. C——m walked out of the yard with me to put me in the route to the County Court, where I was to meet H. by

appointment. He took me a few short détours to see some of the minor lions, the Bull and Mouth to begin with, the great popular central tap of the day, in what may be called Mid-Bourke-street, the nucleus of the vast subsequent cab and omnibus innovation, and then a favourite rallying-point, from its contiguity to the Post-office, the close neighbourhood of rifle-galleries, bowling-saloons, and billiard-tables. The bar was really a sight for a stranger, with its close-packed crowd in front, skirted by outsiders, who were served out over the hats of the inner ranks. Effervescing drinks frequently boiling over in the transit, and nobblers overturning in trayfuls on the brandy-proof heads of the indifferent multitude. Whenever a man fell or retired, the gap was filled up like magic by a fresh customer, so that the demand never flagged, the tide never ebbed, the fusillade never intermitted: "Nobblers for five!"—"Six ales!"—"Rounds of Old Toms!"—"Whiskies neat!" "Nobblers," "Toms," "Ales," with only an ever-varying transposition in precedency, continued without ceasing, at the uniform rate of one shilling, all day long. Then there were sliding panels at the back communicating with the eating-rooms, where crescents of empty trays were always waiting for repletion, and large pigeon-holes, too, at the side, opening into the hall, beset with shouldering groups, like the South Eastern Railway ticket apertures on the Derby day. The upper apartments were as fully occupied as those below, if I might judge from the torrents of waiters of both sexes rushing down or sidling up in obedience to the law of demand and supply, the stair steps positively dripping alcohol, and the dropsical oakum mat at the bottom squirting intoxicating juices under every tread. The lower atmosphere was one of spirituous essences, as dense as a Scotch mist, which I verily believe would inebriate a person of weak constitutional powers, and over it rolled, in murky

curls, a thick fog of vile tobacco-smoke that would poison a rookery. C——m assured me they often received as much as 500*l.* per day—two-thirds profit—and that the good-will of the concern, with only a two years' lease to run, would fetch 12,000*l.* As we were about moving on, a passenger in a Sandridge omnibus was profanely addressing the bloody eyes of the driver for not starting, but the artist in question retorted on the soul of the plaintiff, refusing to "budge an inch until he got his nobbler, as there was no place to get another drain 'tween there and the pier," an interminable drive of a mile and a half. I mention the circumstance as a faint illustration of the prevailing thirst for strong drinks, which seemed to me to be indulged in nearly as much from a notion that they are indispensable to health as from actual appetite, until the habit becomes inveterate and invincible. I remember a certain bootmaker in the Haymarket afflicted in a similar manner, whom the Liberator used to drop in on occasionally, assured of his joke. "Well, Mac," the great Dan would say, in his one rotundo accent, "how are you this morning?" "Ah, Liberator," Mac would plaintively reply, "I would get on well enough, but this whisky is killing me;" as if the poor man was condemned to swallow daily hourly doses of Innishonen, and was outside the pale of all condonation, or forbidden to expiate the decree by any other species of penance. Many, perhaps a majority, in Victoria drink from an inherent love of spirits, but many drink "for company's sake," or to counteract the evaporating influences of the climate, acquiring a habit from custom, and not from constitutional tendency.

We next looked into a fish-shop, a wretched little place, most wretchedly supplied both in quantity, quality, and variety: a few flat-heads—a fish that would be thrown overboard in the English or Irish Channel—a few guard-fish—a

delicate fish averaging nine inches in length, as thick as a man's finger, with a beak, or bill, not included, about as long as that of the common snipe—these marine rarities fetched 6s. per dozen—and two or three snappers, an uncouth, scaly monster, ugly to look at and woolly when boiled, which, from the scarcity of supply, commanded absurd prices. The turn of the next street brought us in front of a general provision store, with a falling shutter to the window, on which were arranged a small assortment of the few vegetables then raised in the colony, and a small basket of eggs; a few pendent fowl, divested of feathers, were suspended from the door-jambs, and a few with intact windpipes were crammed under the counter, which was fitted up as a coop. In this establishment, during my brief sojourn, I saw common cabbages sell at 2s. 6d. each, one moderately good cauliflower at 5s., a pair of plucked fowl at 30s., half a dozen eggs at the rate of 18s. per dozen, and a turkey refused at the offer of 2*l.* 10s. The potatoes were ticketed at 6d. per lb., and the live fowl priced according to condition. I also saw a decent woman handling and bargaining for a pair which she said she wanted to keep for laying, but one of them took wing during the manipulation and got into the street, to which she called the proprietor's attention; but his notice of the occurrence was "24s. the pair—you look after the outsider;" and he insisted on the money, too, compelling the poor woman to follow the truant or rest content with the loss. I may also remark, in illustration of colonial independence in 1853, that the gentleman who purchased the plucked fowl, waiting for his opportunity, observed to the dealer, "Perhaps you would be good enough to send home my fowl by a messenger." "Messenger! sir," said he—"messenger! I know of no such a person hereabouts."

Our next move was up the hill of a narrow street, in the

direction of a small gathering of people in front of a dirty, dusty, uninhabited-looking house, where C——m took his leave, announcing, "This is the County Court." I thought at first it was a mild practical joke, but was at the same moment convinced to the contrary by a bareheaded man rushing recklessly down the narrow stairs to the front door, and shouting out in tones of exaggerated human thunder, "Jones agin O'Shaughnissy! Jones agin O'Shaughnissy! Jones agin O'Shaughnissy! cuminappear, or be struck out o' the list!" This proclamation was followed by a slight movement, in which a small, perky man, with a bag but without a wig, hastened up-stairs, with a train of five persons, whom I set down as witnesses, followed by an unctuous-looking whipper-in, or whipper-up, attired in undeniable Chancery-lane costume. I made an effort to squeeze after them through the little narrow, dingy hall, which was papered over above shoulder-line mark by cause-lists, old and late, notices of sale under decrees of the court, schedules of general rules, with daily interpolations, as if the rules of to-day would not suit for to-morrow. I also noticed attorneys' addresses, barristers' removal of chambers, scriveners' charges, and bailiffs' whereabouts. After considerable delay and exertion, I got as far as the little first landing, where I was obliged to flatten into a corner, to let the victorious O'Shaughnissyites stream down in the glory of a nonsuit point, which had been just ruled in their favour. My next start brought me to a little lobby, with three doors, the left one opening into a closet-room, hung with cobwebs, set apart as a robing-room, the one on the opposite, somewhat less frequented by spiders, leading into the retiring-room of the judge, while that in front constituted the entrance to the august court, where the blindfolded lady with the scales was not enabled to take up her position over the judgment-

seat, because there was not sufficient room for her to stand erect between his honour's head and the coved ceiling. The body of the court was the whole breadth of the apartment, sixteen feet by a depth of five feet, separated by a rough-and-ready railing from the interior, which occupied a space below the bench of about sixteen feet by twelve. Immediately inside the railing was a narrow oblong perch, fronted by a table for solicitors, and a removed school-bench in front of that, for barristers, who, when mustering strong —that is, eight or nine—occupied also the step of the bench, one perhaps squeezing on to the edge of the chair beside the associate. Along the windows there was a mammoth desk —never made to order—for reporters; and, opposite, an old mantelpiece, on which the familiar Bible most generally rested. There was no ventilation; and although the day was a raw one outside, in this den of justice the atmosphere was nothing better than an oleaginous vapour, scented with essence of tallow and otto of brandy. I had not patience to remain many minutes in the rancid vapour-bath, but even during my brief stay I was enabled to jot down a legal note, worth recording as a specimen of forensic curtness current in Victoria. A witness, under cross-examination by a barrister, now a popular and most excellent judge, was asked, "Were you present at the bargain about the price of the horse?" "No, but I heard——" *Barrister:* "Keep your hearsay evidence to yourself." *Witness:* "Smith told——" "I want no tales—shut up." Which is equivalent to the "Go down" of Westminster Hall, but in my mind incomparably more comprehensive. H. whispered me to say he would remain until the rising of the court, as he had already elected to try the Bar in preference to the Diggings.

I then went in quest of my brother, and found him in S——bs's auction-room, making terms for the advertisement

and sale of his goods expected up river that evening. He was particularly gleesome, as his merchandise was well assorted, accurately suited to the juncture and the season, particularly the waterproof clothing, heavy boots and shoes, harness and saddlery, which, on an average, were quoted at prices that would realise 150 per cent. clear profit, commanding a ready sale. The terms were 5 per cent. commission, to which at least 2½ more might be safely superadded to cover extras, as the expense of advertising alone was a most formidable charge. In many of the second-class marts there was a very serious drawback, from the premeditated procrastination in preparing and rendering account sales, in many instances extending over months, during which the auctioneer put out the customers' money to fructify for his own benefit, reaping no inconsiderable benefit, when twenty-five per cent. interest was the prevailing rate outside the bank parlours. This complaint, however, could not be urged against the Messrs. S——bs, whose zeal and promptitude in the discharge of their duties always kept their hands full and their customers steadfast. The auction-rooms of that day, with the exception of those of Messrs. S——bs, and S——n, and P——y, were nothing better than tumble-down make-shifts; but the amount of property that daily changed hands within their portals was something approaching the fabulous, all the more incredible when computed in comparison with the population of Victoria, not then amounting to the number of inhabitants in a third-rate British city.

Before starting for home, I went to inspect and give my opinion on the eligibility of some small premises, under offer to my brother until ten o'clock the following morning. They consisted of a small two-storied brick house and yard, in a back slum called Bank-place, behind the Bank of Australasia, approached from Collins-street by a stile. The house

contained two rooms below, twelve feet by six feet, cut up by a staircase; two above, twelve feet by ten feet, finished in the rudest style, and a filthy yard, occupying an area about as large as that on which the house stood. There was a seven years' lease to run, and the terms were 450*l.* per annum rent, with a fine of 500*l.* He closed for this concern, and shortly afterwards covered the yard with a stone and mud store, at an outlay of 700*l.*, when he was offered 2200*l.* to walk out and give up possession. This single case may enable the reader to form a conception of the scale of rents, and the value of property in Melbourne at that period, but I will give a few others within my personal knowledge, one a fancy warehouse in Great Bourke-street, let at 4000*l.*, in which a large fortune was made under the incubus; the other, the auction mart of Messrs. Francis and Cohen, in Collins-street, rented at 5000*l.* from Mr. W. J. T. Clarke (commonly known as "Big Clarke," the landed leviathan), who purchased it at the prodigious sum of 23,100*l.*, or 700*l.* per foot frontage, with a depth of 168 feet. Many wise people—that is, wise in their own estimation—shook their heads portentously when they heard of the price, prophesying that Mr. Clarke's monomania for landed property, like that of Napoleon for empire, would eventually crumple up the big man of Victoria. But Mr. Clarke does not buy at random, or with his eyes shut: he generally makes his great purchases under a species of prearrangement, which almost exclude them from the category of speculations, and in the instance adduced, he had pretty well secured undeniable tenants at a rent of 5000*l.* per annum, on a seven years' lease; so that at the end of the term, and allowing 7½ per cent. interest on the purchase-money, he will have the property for nothing.

But although Mr. Clarke did not lay the foundation of

his princely fortune at hap-hazard, there are many of the millionnaires of Melbourne who came into their vast possessions not merely by the caprice, but, as it were, under the coercion of fortune, never even entertaining the faintest foreshadowing of their luck until it became fully and intrinsically realised, far more miraculously and less deservedly than Lord Byron's morning fame. Port Phillip had been but gradually and slowly recovering from her prostrate and insolvent condition of 1842, when the news reached Melbourne of the discovery of gold in New South Wales, and so slightly had the bulk of its inhabitants tasted of the cup of prosperity, and so little faith had they in their contest for progress, or supremacy with mutton against gold, that a mania for removal set in, and most of those who had money left precipitately, and many of those who had their 'nice patches of city property disposed of it without reference so much to its value as to its capability for transporting their families to the modern Ophir. Under this *auri sacra fames*, innumerable small lots, making, in their aggregate, immense breadths of property, were sold at nominal prices in the early part of 1851, which, ere its close, were "pearls beyond price," translated into the seventh heaven of appreciation by the fortuitous discovery of the Ballarat shepherd. I know the particulars of numerous cases of constrained fortune; one I will relate, which occurred in the person of an humble man from my native country, who accumulated a very modest competence in Melbourne under the old régime—first by manual labour, and then by carting at the moderate rates of the day. He purchased a town lot in Swanston-street, and erected a wooden house on it, in which, during the progress of his industrial prosperity, he opened a little shop for the good woman. His decent thrift was as remarkable as his industry, so that, in homely phrase, "he got the

name of having a little dry money always by him;" and at the period in question he was beset by importunate neighbours and friends, imploring him, as he intended remaining, to purchase their town allotments at his own price. In some cases he yielded, not so much with the view of benefiting himself as of helping a few friends on the road to fortune, and, much against his own wish or conviction, he secured for some 450*l.* property which in less than fifteen months he sold for 15,000*l.*, and which was resold, within the subsequent year, for nearly three times that amount. Had my humble countryman purchased to the full amount of his means, and held over like other stay-at-home townsmen, he might be now side by side in the Legislative Council of Victoria with another Sligo man, who came to Port Phillip without any capital but his brains and his hands, but who is reputed at present as possessed of property worth half a million sterling.

But as I have much more to say about sudden acquisition and the unprecedented advance in the value, or rather the price, of town and suburban property, I will close this chapter by observing that the determination of H. to commence practice obliging him to take an office in town, and the removal of my brother from the premises in Bank-place, led to the break-up of our establishment on Emerald Hill, which then passed into the sole possession of the W. family.

CHAPTER VII.

Saturday in Melbourne—House Rents in 1858—The Chancery-lane of Victoria—Its Denizens—The Barristers and Attorneys of that Day—Contrasts of their domestic Ménage—Foot-note—Newspapers of the Day—John Pascoe Fawkner, Esq.—His Pen-and-Ink Newspaper—The *Advertiser*—Extract from that original Periodical—Its first Issue in Type—Leading Article—Advertisement—Extinction of the *Advertiser*—New Journal—Reappearance of the *Advertiser*—Glance at the Career of J. P. Fawkner—*Herald* and *Argus*—Wonderful Start of the *Argus* on the Gold Discovery—Struggles of the *Herald*—Success of its Contemporary—Their common Creed—Different Manner of instilling their Doctrines—*Argus* Persecution of Governor Latrobe—His Antecedents—His Qualification—Great Difficulties of his Position—Released from the Pillory by the Arrival of Mr. Secretary Foster—*Argus* Politics the Politics of Men.

Saturday in Melbourne is a half-holiday. The banks close at twelve o'clock; merchants come into town without any idea of heavy business; shopping is carried on with a degree of languor, as if it was out of season; and even professional men—always excepting the doctors—seem unprepared to immerse themselves in abstruse research. I came into town to see my brother's bargain ratified, and had a fresh evidence of the fictitious value of property in Melbourne, and the great insufficiency of accommodation for the spring tide of population which had set in, in the rent he obtained for his rooms the moment he got into possession. H. and a brother barrister took a large and a small one at 4*l.* and 2*l.* per week; Messrs. S. and A. the other large one at 4*l.*; and he retained the other as an office and sleeping-

apartment, the rent of the three rooms let, covering his entire rent and taxes. Bank-place (the name of the locality) runs into Chancery-lane, the focus of the long-robed gentry; and both it and all the surrounding lanes, alleys, and passages are a sort of legal warren, burrowed by barristers, attorneys, commissioners for taking affidavits, official assignees, law stationers, scriveners, and engrossers, frequented by an ebbing and flowing stream of litigious citizens, as well as isolated loungers in cracked hats and shiny coats, ready to solder up any broken chains of important evidence, or undertake any other behests, growing out of the great palladium of British liberty and independence, for a proper consideration. At that time, barristers, taken as a whole, appeared to be the inferior class, so far as worldly adjuncts and ap pearances went. He was considered a swell in his way who could manage a room large enough to admit of having his stretcher and its appurtenances screened off by a soiled counterpane. But, for the most part, they hunted in couples, and one would be sitting on the edge of his bed, silently picking the demurrable points out of a bill in equity, while his brother's pen would be galloping over the brass nails of his trunk, taking down instructions for a plea at common law from a patronising attorney. And while barristers eked out a fly-blown existence in their dens, confined to the female society of their charwomen, attorneys lived in style in country villas, driving smart gigs, or riding neat hacks, to their well-furnished offices of mornings, now and then of Saturday evenings taking out their favourite court men in return for a nice point saved, or a successful new trial motion, to give them a blow-out on poultry and vegetables after a long course of tough chops and sodden steak.*

* Let it not be supposed, however, that even in 1853 there were not a select few far in the van of the herd, and above the sphere of solicitorial

To-day I had my first deliberate meal of newspaper literature, having purchased the *Argus* and *Herald*, both daily papers, and, with the exception of the *Geelong Advertiser*, a three-days a week journal, the only journals of note in the colony at the time. Either the *Argus* or the *Herald* would have maintained a highly respectable position in any metropolis in the Old World on the score of literary ability, and certainly the crowded aspect of their advertising pages struck me with amazement, considering the age and population of the colony.

A little over fifteen years before, when the entire population of Port Phillip scarcely numbered three thousand souls, John Pascoe Fawkner, the man who really rocked the cradle

patronage. Three men, at least, of that period were in receipt of incomes equal to those of leaders in the first flight of business in Westminster Hall. Mr. M*ch*e totted an average aggregate of 800*l.* per month, and never was money more deservedly earned or more cheerfully paid. Mr. F*ll*ws, a young man fresh from the musty chambers of the inns of court, even exceeded that. Although below par as a court man, he was laden with black letter lore, possessed great legal acuteness and dialectic subtlety, and, like a certain member of the Irish bar who earned for himself the sobriquet of Dicky Demurrer, he acquired for himself a special fame for his keenness in scenting out a flaw or hitting a blot in a plea—a faculty idolised in the heart's core of all terrier attorneys, who overwhelmed him with chamber business, and gave him the junior brief on one side or the other. Mr. I**l*nd, a young member of the Irish bar, I have good reason to know, in twelve consecutive months gathered a professional harvest close on the confines of 12,000*l.* If he was not stored with the toil-earned acquirements of Mr. F*ll*ws, he was endowed with intuitive readiness and quickness. In court, as wary as a magpie on a wall, there was no stealing a march upon him, while his untutored eloquence reached the hearts of the jury in its blarney, or convulsed the court from its original humour. By turns a termagant scold, a scathing satirist, or a smothering joker; the terror of halting witnesses, the favourite of yawning jurymen, who felt the tedium of their duties relieved by his pleasantries; often, I fear, stretching a point for his client in compensation for an impromptu pun. The amount of income I have set down in these three cases would be divested of any suspicion of exaggeration if my readers could but see the interminable length of a Melbourne cause-list, and form any idea of the untractable stubbornness of Melbourne litigants, who, when they settled out of court, rarely did so until after the delivery of briefs to counsel.

of the colony, who watched over its tender years with parental solicitude, and still stands bravely by its side in its proud adolescence, started the first newspaper in the new land, thus founding the fourth estate in anticipation of the three great chartered elements of the British constitution. Convinced that even in a nomadic state of society the influence of the press would be potent in stimulating the march of progress, in checking and exposing the derelictions of Government—always prone to arbitrary erring when irresponsible, and at a distance from the controlling counsels of its supreme head—in giving a tone to society, and in installing a spirit of independence to the community. He started the *Melbourne Advertiser*, without waiting for the importation of a press or a fount of type, launching it upon the world by the instrumentality of pen and ink. It is said there is one of the original numbers in existence, which is possessed by Mr. Archer, the editor of *Facts and Figures*, who published a facsimile of it in No. 2 of that publication; and, with this acknowledgment, I beg leave to copy its front page as one of the modern curiosities of literature:

THE
MELBOURNE ADVERTISER.

Port Phillip, Australia.

No. 1, written for, and published by, John P. Fawkner,

January 1st, Monday, 1838, Melbourne.

Vol. 1st.

We do opine that Melbourne cannot reasonably remain longer marked on the chart of advancing civilisation without its Advertiser.

Such being our imperial fiat, we do intend, therefore, by means of this our Advertiser, to throw the resplendent light of publicity upon all the affairs of this new colony, whether of commerce, of agriculture, or of the arts and mysteries of the grazier. All these patent roads to wealth are thrown open to the adventurous Port Phillipians. All these sources of riches are about to be (or are already) become accessible to each adven-

turous colonist of NOUS. The future fortunes of the rising Melbournians will be much accelerated by the dissemination of intelligence, consequent upon the press being thrown open here, but until the arrival of the printing materials, we will, by means of the humble pen, diffuse such intelligence as may be found expedient, or as may arise.

The energies of the present population of this rapidly rising district have never been exceeded in any of the colonies of Great Britain.

Its giant strides have filled with astonishment the minds of all the neighbouring states. The sons of Britain languish when debarred the use of that mighty engine the Press. A very small degree of support, timely afforded, will establish a newspaper here, but until some further arrangements are made it will be merely an advertising sheet, and will be given away to householders.

Nine numbers of the *Advertiser* were regularly circulated in manuscript before the means and appliances came to hand for issuing it in print, and they came forward, at last, unaccompanied by a printer. However, the man who could start a newspaper without type was not to be deterred from consummating his project from the want of a regular-bred printer. After casting about and inquiring for some time, he got tidings of a stripling who had in early youth spent a few months hanging on as a messenger about a printing-office in Launceston, and who had learned a little of the art of a compositor. With this promising disciple of Caxton, Mr. Fawkner set about the task of bringing out a regular weekly journal. I annex the leading article in its first-printed number:

WE AIM TO LEAD, NOT DRIVE.

It is not our intention to make many professions, but it is now, and shall continue to be, our constant study, to advance the interests of the Port Phillipians, to advocate their cause at all times with the powers that be, but not in the MOOD IMPERATIVE. We will point out our wants, and, as far as possible, describe the easiest and best manner of satisfying them; we will cater for English, Colonial, and Foreign intelligence, and will add as much light and amusing reading as our limited space will allow.

Melbourne was a wild, and, as far as Europeans are concerned, uninhabited place when the establishment of the proprietor of this journal arrived here in August, 1835. It is his boast that he caused Melbourne to be colonised. Mr. J. Batman had arrived at Port Phillip in June, 1835,

but his taste led him to select Indented Head in June, 1836. The few settlers then arrived subscribed, and built a small place of worship, which still serves both for the Established Church and the Presbyterian, each having two services on the Sunday. A Sunday-school is also kept in the same, in which is also kept a day-school. Large subscriptions are now in progress for each establishment, and the present place of worship is to be reserved for a school.

We earnestly beg the public to excuse this our first appearance, in the absence of the compositor, who was engaged. We were under the necessity of trusting our first number (in print) to a Van Diemenian youth of eighteen, and this lad only worked at this business about a year, from his tenth to his eleventh, 1830 to 1831. Next the *honest printer* from whom the type was bought had swept up all his old waste letter, and called it type, and we at present labour under many wants. We even have not so much as pearlash to clean the dirty type.

The second page contains an advertisement which in itself tends to exemplify the revolution which has taken place in Port Phillip since that date:

The undersigned begs to inform the public that he has a boat and two men in readiness for the purpose of crossing and recrossing passengers between Williamstown and the opposite beach.

Parties from Melbourne are requested to raise a smoke, and the boat will be at their service as soon as practicable. The least charge is five shillings, and two shillings each when the number exceeds two.

In 1838, the civilised mode of sending telegraphic messages between the capital and Sandridge, or Williamstown, was the very primitive one most generally used in all savage nations, but in less than nineteen years afterwards each of these localities was able to interchange intelligence with the quickness of thought by means of the telegraphic wire.

After a brief career, the *Advertiser* came to an end, the Colonial Chancellor of the Exchequer deeming it an infringement of the law to insert paid advertisements without a license; and on the 27th of October of the same year, the first duly licensed newspaper issued in Port Phillip made its appearance, under the title of the *Port Phillip Gazette*, a bi-weekly journal. However, Mr. Fawkner was not a man to be quietly quenched out, for, as soon as possible after pre-

paring the bonds, and perfecting the sureties, which had to be entered into at Sydney,—the local government not then having authority to do so,—he again entered the field of literary glory at the head of a new journal, entitled *The Port Phillip Patriot*, not then alone in his glory, but with a foeman in the front, which, to a man of Mr. Fawkner's peculiar temperament, was sufficient to inspire fresh ardour and energy. Imperial politics did not appear to engage much of the attention or eloquence of the rival editors. Local administration and the selfish intriguing of private parties for interested ends were the prevailing topics on which they delighted to dilate, the *Gazette* espousing the pretensions of the land-and-power-grasping, or aristocratical party, while the *Patriot*—as he does to the present day—took his stand by the side of the people,* each giving occasional zest to their lucubrations by strong seasonings of personal abuse and vituperation. Mr. Fawkner has been always ardent as he has been consistent in his opposition to questionable territorial aggrandisement. He denounced at the outset the absurd pretension of Mr. Batman to the royalty of a principality, on the strength of a deed cajoled from the unsophisticated natives for a few razors and blankets; and was always at strife with the grasping greed of the squatters in appropriating unoccupied land. He ridiculed and exposed their absurd demand for compensation in lieu of digger intrusion, and was mainly instrumental in defeating the late Land Bill in the Legislative Council, conscientiously believing it conferred undue privileges on the squatters; and although not officially connected with public journalism since 1840,—when he retired from the management of the *Port Phillip Patriot*,—he very frequently figures as an able correspondent, when any public job is on the

* When Mr. Fawkner thinks the people wrong (as in the emigration and labour question), he does not hesitate to oppose and denounce them.

tapis, or any public grievance is in need of a fearless expositor. I will not offer any apology for this digression, because, in the first place, I conceive it will be of interest to the reader, anxious to trace Victorian institutions to their source; secondly, because feeling as I do that I could not write any notice, however trifling, of this great colony, without bringing the name of the Hon. J. P. Fawkner, M.L.C., into prominent and honourable notice, I think I could choose no other topic with which I could so properly associate it as the great institution of the press.

I believe I am right in saying that the *Herald* was the leading journal when the colony fairly started on its career of settlement and permanent prosperity. It acquired its advanced rank by priority of birth, and kept its uniform position, floating down the same quiet stream on which its contemporary, the *Argus*, was subsequently launched. But as soon as the active spirit of commercial enterprise breathed new life into the affairs of Port Phillip, and modern progress imparted its ardent impulses to the philosopher, the merchant, the mechanic, and the settler, the *Argus*, managed by an energetic and adventurous proprietary, quickly and sensibly commenced diminishing the precedency of the *Herald*, which was then under the direction of a gentleman who, though respected as a citizen, with a reputation for propriety and integrity, was altogether wanting in those natural gifts and business acquirements calculated to sustain his paper in the teeth of a strong and talented competition. So that, even before the opening of the gold-fields, the *Argus* was, in sailor phraseology, well to windward, and caught the prospering gales of that stupendous discovery, while the sails of its contemporary were flapping idly against the mast. And when the *Herald* in its turn felt the influence of the breeze, the *Argus* was hull down in advance, beyond all reasonable hope

of being overhauled. The "Wants" of 50,000 immigrants, the inquiries of thousands of "Missing Friends," the "Board and Lodging" of hundreds of good Samaritans, the "Goods on Sale" of whole legions of upper-world merchants, the "Sales by Auction" of battalions of knights of the hammer, the "Impoundings" of jealous squatters, the "Programmes" of theatres and circuses, and Salles Valentino, the "Starting" of coaches, the "Sailing" of steam and sailing packets, the "Proclamations of Insolvency," the "Houses and Lands to Let or Sell," the "Money to Lend," the "Rewards" to discover "Murder or Stolen Property," the "Notices of Partnership" brought such myriads of advertisements to the foremost journal, that six of its capacious pages were unable to contain them, causing the appearance of a phenomenon in the colony, in the shape of a supplement to a daily newspaper of eight pages, equal in area to that of the great Thunderer of Printing House-square.

The proprietor of the *Herald* made a bold but tardy effort to regain his bearing. He looked about for co-operation, and had the rare luck of securing as associates men of position, of talent, and of means. The late attorney-general, the new editor of *Punch*, and a learned judge were added to the staff: all working with a will, and at great pecuniary sacrifice. A new office was taken in a central position, new presses and types were brought into play, political sagacity directed its course, and distinguished ability shone out through its letter-press; but the *Argus* still maintained its advance, far, far away on the arc of the horizon. Its advertisements, contrary to the general rule, secured its circulation. They were devoured with avidity from its damp sheet, while its leaders were reserved to superinduce the afternoon siesta.

There was nothing to choose between either paper on the score of politics, for, in fact, in those days there was no such

thing, properly speaking, in Victoria. Politics then seemed to consist solely in abusing the government, denouncing the squatters, and patting the diggers on the back. In this creed both were agreed; but there existed a difference of degree in promulgating the common doctrine. The *Herald* was always consistent and dignified, but impartial. The *Argus* was unreasoning, vindictive, and truculent. It was not restrained by rules or usages, or decencies; it struck below the belt, rather than pretermit a chance of promoting its end; and failing to destroy a government, it sought out an individual victim, worrying him incessantly and goring him without mercy, in fault as when blameless, not even abating its virulence when the pall of death fell over his abode, nor when the sterner feelings of human nature are prone to melt in charity on the occasion of eternal separation.* The *Herald* attacked the whole system of administration, only resorting to personalities in cases of individual corruption or transgression, and always hailing in terms of hopeful commendation any gleamings of reform or amendment. But the *Argus*, in swaying its savage knout over the entire government, brought every lash to bear on the shoulders of Governor Latrobe, following him beyond the limits of official life with a species of "inextinguishable hatred," and studiously ignoring his most palpable endeavours to suit the narrow powers of that period to the gigantic requirements of the new era. To keep pace with necessities which then daily and hourly sprang up in rank crops in every governmental department would have required the attributes of Divinity; and because Mr. Latrobe was not a god, he must necessarily be a demon in the estimation of the *Argus*.

* Allusion is here made to Governor Latrobe, to the death of his lady, and his final departure.

Mr. Latrobe was neither a god nor a demon, neither a person marvellously endued with human wisdom and force of character, nor one who could be mistaken as of inferior capacity. He was the son of a clergyman, brought up and educated by his exemplary parent. Imbued at an early period of life with strong moral and religious sentiments, and possessed of good natural ability, he soon became a rapid proficient in his studies, ultimately attaining a reputation for scholastic acquirements that secured for him the suitable employment of travelling companion and tutor to a French nobleman, one which turned out to be peculiarly congenial to his tastes, and led to the development of that modest literary ability of which he has given the world such agreeable instalments in his books on America and Mexico. To those works, I believe, from the internal testimony they bore to the general talents of the man, he was indebted for some minor appointment under Government in the West Indies; but as merit will make itself apparent in trifles, he soon satisfied his *employés* that at least he was a few degrees above the ordinary herd of public officials, and when the opportunity presented itself, he was offered and accepted the then secondary office of superintendent of Port Phillip, having as his superior the Governor of New South Wales —an appointment not intended as a recognition of any very pre-eminent talent, or brilliant acquirements. The superintendence of Port Phillip in the days of its primitive and pastoral existence required no great scope of intellect to direct or control it; and so long as it remained a pastoral settlement, creeping slowly ahead, gradually unfolding its resources, "wanting but little," and giving timely premonition of its few and simple wants, Mr. Latrobe discharged the functions of his vicarial government with uni-

versal satisfaction, and justified the opinion that the home government formed of his abilities. If he failed in guiding or directing the whirlwind of prosperity, or moulding into immediate order the magical tumult that burst forth simultaneously with the discovery of gold, he should not have been accused of disappointing public expectation, or pelted with obloquy, for not proving equal to an emergency from which very probably he would have shrunk could he have foreseen it. There were few statesmen of the day, if any, who could have improvised, from the resources at hand, an executive discipline, or a fount of taxation to meet the unparalleled demands of the new order of things, and all the dictates of generosity and magnanimity proclaim that, instead of being reviled and calumniated, he should have been sympathised with, and assisted in his trying difficulties.

I am not exactly sure that I shall be exonerating the editor and proprietor of the *Argus* from the obloquy attachable to his policy by suggesting that he was actuated in his persecution of the governor, then supreme and irresponsible, more as a matter of trade than from feelings of personal enmity—more from a desire of circulation than from aspirations of patriotism; and, in stating that conviction, I am considerably fortified by the fact that, when Mr. Foster arrived and undertook the office of colonial secretary, he very soon superseded Mr. Latrobe in the pillory of vituperation, and became the target for all the rotten slanders and stinking exaggerations of the *Argus*. He never got a particle of credit for any order in council savouring of liberality, but was held individually responsible for all the unpopular decrees of the executive. He was limned as an arch-fiend bent upon increasing and perpetuating digger slavery and persecution; and the diggers really regarded him as a devil

incarnate, being rather propitiated by his voluntary downfal, even under a new régime, than quelled by the slaughter of the Eureka stockade.

This game, as I remarked, suited the trade policy of the *Argus* admirably. There was such a relentless persistance in its tone, the diggers were cajoled into the belief that it was genuine earnestness. All legitimate authority was abused with such a seeming heartiness that imperial connexion came to be a question of debate on the gold-fields. And the license tax (a most odious imposition in the eyes of the diggers) was so held up to public execration as an infamous and illegal exaction, that the vast community of diggers, gradually and adroitly warmed up from a gentle simmer to a full boil, rushed madly, with arms in their hands, into open rebellion to procure its abolition. But on looking round for their counsellor and abettor, they discovered that his pen was conspicuous amongst the plumes in the Government camp. This, however, is anticipating my personal narrative, so I beg leave to revert to the proper order of events in a new chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Melbourne on the Sabbath—Professor Sands—His Saloon—His Style of doing Business—Free-trade and Religious Toleration—Sabbatarian Discipline—Sudden Changes of Temperature—Botanic Gardens—South Yarra—Cynical Stranger—His Mode of accounting for the Good Behaviour of the Multitude—Diggers' Robing-room—Encounter with a Lunatic—St. Kilda—House upset—Its Strange Appearance—Lose my Way returning Home at Night—Reach Home safe in the Morning.

For a new, rollicking, harum-scarum, devil-may-care country, where, in reality, the odour of sanctity was not in the ascendant, I marvelled to witness, for the first time, the air of quiet serenity and decorousness which pervaded the capital on the Sabbath morning. It was not early when I crossed the ferry, and sauntered into Market-square (whose centre was then occupied by a confused mob of tents and deck-houses), and I could almost fancy the echo of my foot-fall was reproving my trespass on the prevailing stillness. There was not a soul to be seen throughout the long, long vistas of streets, as I crossed them, on my way up the hill, and the first symptom of animation that I encountered was on coming abreast of a barber's pole, which issued from a capacious canvas tenement, adorned with the notification, in conspicuous characters, that Professor Sands "practises the art of hair-cutting and shaving on scientific principles, and gives lessons thereon inside."

I was attracted by the novelty of the sign, and being in

want of a scientific cut, after the knife-and-fork style of doing business on shipboard, I was debating with myself whether I should have the operation performed immediately or wait until after first prayers, when the Professor appeared at the doorway, wreathed in smiles and a snowy apron. His invitation was so gracious and so original I was unable to resist it. So I made my entrée into a spacious apartment, with seats along either side, all closely tenanted by parties waiting for their turns, the centre being occupied by four American shaving-chairs, and the further end by as many basons for washing and shampooing. Professor Sands was a genu-wyne Yankee, and no mistake, both in external aspect, accent, pronunciation, and volubility, and, as he would say of another, a "right-down smart and original fellow," whose acquaintance I cultivated from that moment; indeed, he was a general favourite, and secured fortune as well as popularity. Of course, he was a slight man, approaching to tallness, with a thin visage and a restless eye; he never took a seat, and rarely handled the scissors—"doin' the talkin' an' tradin'," as he said. I wish I could convey even a faint idea of the quick and humorous way in which he detected, drew out, and made use of the several peculiarities of his varied customers, as he walked up and down the shop, because I know it would be by far the most entertaining chapter of the book. His shop never was without a butt, yet I never knew him to give offence. There were shelves all around overhead, on which all sorts of American odds-and-ends and Yankee fixings were temptingly set out, most of them having no manner of collateral connexion with the business, and as sure as the Professor caught an eye scanning a label—and he was always sure to catch it—he popped out an anecdote concerning the miraculous properties of the said article, as if he was wholly unaware it

was under scrutiny. Observing a case of the celebrated Doctor Townsend's sarsaparilla under ocular examination, he would improvise a circumstantial detail of the providential manner in which General Washington's life was rescued by it from a nervous fever on the evening of the day of Bunker's Hill—altogether regardless of the anachronism that the doctor was not born at the general's death—in the same breath warning a curious digger examining pomade pots in the window to be "almighty cautious lest he should get bear's paws or hair on his finger tops, as it was a blot of that identical grease which fell on his own cheek, and gave him that tarnation mole with the hair tuft." "No use in life, Cappin, in eyeing that chin-scraper, Dan Boon's corn doctor, and his gift to old Rough-and-Ready, with which he shaved on hossback during the Mexican war, and hamstrung Santa Anna at the taking of Tampico. It would be a purty tall pile of ten-cent pieces, I tell you, that'd coax that cur'osity out o' my keepin'."

I was infinitely amused at the rattling and unintermitting shower of the Professor's jokes and sallies, and almost forgot my morning's errand, when a fidgety neighbour next me stood up to leave, "as he waited so long, and his turn was so far off." "Wal, I pity your patience," said the Professor, "for I reckon you haven't waited ten minutes all told, and I guess you'd go straight away and be humbugged two mortal hours by a snivelling preacher on the wharf." "As ye'r talking of preaching," said a sour-beer-smelling publican, muffled in lather, "I can't see for why preachers and barbers can go on an' earning of money all seven days long, and a man as pays a hunder a year for license to trade can't do nothing of the kind." "Right as thunder," chimes in the Professor; "free trade and religis toleration is all skunk, when a man with his whoops a droppin' off might fall in staves for want

of a blessed nobbler, while folk are gettin' earwigged in church; leave publicans' doors bang open like church doors and barbers' doors, for bein' noways prejudyced, I don't stick out ahead of the proper point for my crowd. None of the apostles I ever seed on canvas wore cropped heads or bald chins, then why should barbers be favoured afore publicans?" An incontrovertible conclusion, which was received with general commendation, as were indeed most of his sallies and homilies, and, as a natural consequence, most remained to be entertained and operated on, while the few unable to appreciate the Professor's wit preferred remaining to hear rather than provoke it.

Even when I left the Professor's, and got into Great Collins-street, there was not a soul astir. I was in doubt at last whether it was particular reverence for the morning, or painful reminiscences of the previous evening, that kept the folk inside doors. At times, too, I was strongly reminded of Scotland in everything around me, except the pure air, uncertain whether I was not infringing the police regulations by looking up at the clear blue sky instead of into the foul kennel, according to the stern Sabbatarian discipline in cities north of the Tweed. As I reached the intersection of Elizabeth-street, however, I could discern a strong outdoor muster towards its northern terminus, which a taciturn policeman whispered me, mournfully, was the Roman Catholic church. Bells, too, at this moment began tolling in various directions, and elongated strings of triste-looking people glid noiselessly along the flags close in by the houses to escape the mockery of their shadows until they reached their different sanctuaries; but wherever I observed gaily dressed families, accompanied by mirthful children walking in happy bunches, as if intent on performing a pleasing, cheerful, agreeable duty in return for the benefac-

tions of the week, I found they all converged towards the group in the north-end of Elizabeth-street, whither I followed them, in a similar spirit offering thanksgivings, quite as sincere, I believe, and as acceptable, I hope, as if offered up from beneath gloomy brows in accents akin to anguish. It struck me forcibly that an estimate of city population formed by the numbers whom I could see coming and going from the several houses of worship would fall far short of the number assigned to Melbourne, and I very naturally concluded, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, that by far the larger portion of its inhabitants were indifferent to religion beyond its mere surface or external observances. A very large proportion of them—in fact, nearly all the wealthier classes—resided in the charming outlets by which the city is surrounded on all sides; and I discovered, in the course of my afternoon's suburban stroll, that vast numbers of the small shopkeepers and mechanics made it a point to take their families into the country on Sundays, as if to get out of the mill-track of the week, to gladden the eye with the bloom and verdure of nature, to cleanse the lungs from the six days' impurities of their forges, their mills, and their workshops, and to prepare the nerves and spirits for another week's toil by a few hours' gladsome, exhilarating relaxation; for the human frame as well as the hunter's bow loses its elasticity from perpetual tension, even though the strain be of the most orthodox description. Rest and austerity are in no wise synonymous, nor is evangelical spirit-groaning symbolical of the sanctified repose of our beneficent Creator, when, in glorious contemplation of the six days' work, he blessed the seventh and made it holy. And no amount of religious teachings or saintly inculcations will ever convert me to the belief that it is pleasing in the eye of God to spend the Sabbath in moaning and morose mortifica-

tions, or that innocent recreations and amusements are inconsistent with the pure Christian observance of that day. Man is improved in heart, soul, and body by wandering occasionally from his poor perishable haunts into the grand enduring temples of Nature, where his nothingness is most impressively contrasted with the might and majesty of Omnipotence, and not the ear alone, but all the senses, are filled with suasive sermons of hallowed love and awe in praise and exaltation of the goodness and glory of God. Yet the patent latter-day apostles invoke almighty wrath on all such practices and proceedings.

In the morning the air was keen and searching, and I clad myself accordingly, prepared to make a day of it with a friend at St. Kilda; but after prayers, as I commenced my ramble, the sun came out with a radiance and warmth which reminded me of the May in the hemisphere I so recently quitted. Emerging from the direct route to St. Kilda, immediately south of the bridge, I entered an immense enclosure of rising ground, crowned by a broad plateau, which is the chosen site of the future gubernatorial residence, but one, in my mind, decidedly ineligible, even though commanding a fine, expansive prospect on all sides, for the entire area is completely denuded of timber, a bare and naked eminence, much more suitable for an hospital or public institution than for a gentleman's dwelling, for which the charms of privacy and seclusion are altogether indispensable.

The Botanic Gardens are situated, in juxtaposition with the Government demesne, on a hanging amphitheatre, embracing a reedy lake, which is crowded with the different varieties of water-fowl peculiar to the colony, and having its open side washed by the Yarra. The grounds, from their pleasing configuration, are peculiarly susceptible of the ornate style of landscape gardening, and even at that early age betrayed delight-

ful evidences of the exquisite taste and skill of the presiding genius, who, it was pretty generally known, was no less a person than the governor himself. The finest of the old primeval trees of the locality were carefully preserved in striking positions, and beautiful plants of the tapering, graceful Norfolk pine judiciously distributed so as to contribute to the effect and heighten the contrast betwixt them and the indigenous patriarchs; while all the rare evergreens and beauteous flowering shrubs of the entire Polynesian archipelago that could be acclimatised to the temperature of the Southern Pacific were scattered about with an air of studied negligence as if they were the natural underwood of the luxurious soil. The fancy-shaped beds were stocked with lovely flowers and delicate plants, finely gravelled walks leading the visitor through the richest and most fragrant districts, or to sweet grass-carpeted openings, where, from rustic seats, the most charming vistas led away the captive eye. There was a gay and happy throng enjoying themselves when I entered, and from their very decorous demeanour I could have almost conceived there was a degree of exclusiveness exercised in the admission, for the boisterous digger was not represented in any of the groups I encountered, nor was the courtesan to be suspected amongst the well but modestly-attired females who mingled amongst them. I dare say if there was a tavern within the precincts of the gardens we would have been favoured with a good sprinkling of their society; but, as it was, all were of the genteel, well-behaved stamp, albeit in no way evangelical. I was so much surprised, and so thoroughly pleased at the scene, that I longed for a companion to share my gratification and interchange sentiments with me, in accordance with which feeling I sat myself down beside a gentlemanly-looking person, who was sitting alone on a bench close by me. I think he discerned my emotion as well as my object in sitting near

him, for he looked a cynical smile as I turned towards him; but, being full of my feeling, I determined on accosting him, notwithstanding his evident repugnance at my contiguity. I first combined a respectable panegyric on the grounds and the weather, which he heard without any response. Then, after a decent pause, I remarked, in a less indirect manner, "that the gardens reflected great credit on the colony," which only extracted a mocking "hum" and a slight shift of position; but following up this slight success quickly by a eulogium on "the appearance and behaviour of the visitors," I brought him to his legs sharply with a dry laugh, when, turning courteously towards me, he remarked, in a very polite tone, "I really am at loss, sir, to discover the grounds of your astonished admiration of the people of this place, seeing that nine-tenths of them were sent out to us by the very best judges in Great Britain;" upon which, making a becoming bow, he retired, leaving me to discover the satire at my leisure. He was evidently a man at war with the world, who perhaps enjoyed days of peaceful prosperity in the primitive era of Port Phillip, and, having had a turn of ill-luck in latter times, attributed his bad fortune to the new order of things and the new-comers.

I have no doubt it was the proximity of the Government demesne and the Botanic Gardens that induced the *bon ton* of the metropolis to establish their suburban head-quarters at South Yarra, a high-lying district immediately abutting on them, running in a quick but lovely slope on the one side down to the Yarra, and gently subsiding in its western declivity into the rich and picturesque vale of Gardiners' Creek, which is also a quarter of fashionable resort. The land in the South Yarra district, fortunately for its abiding pre-eminence, was originally in the hands of wealthy and respectable classes, free enough from the vice of avarice to

resist the prevailing temptation of cutting up their properties into small allotments, intersected with streets, and lanes, and by-ways. On the contrary, wishing to keep the profane multitude at a distance, paddocks, instead of patches of land, were put into the market, and the purchasers, who were mostly of the settling class, were thus enabled to build fine dwellings and surround themselves with gardens and pleasure-grounds. This region was even then a delectable spot, and the price which the land fetched debarred any one but persons of means from invading its exclusive neighbourhood. The villa residences then in existence were of a superior order, with grounds scrupulously neat and trim, after the style of Putney or Twickenham, although an ordinary gardener at that period would have considered himself insulted if proffered a smaller salary (not vulgar wages, mind you) than 250*l.* per year. The first vehicle resembling a respectable private carriage caught my sight at one of those pretty residences, and I have not to this moment forgotten my early predilection for that charming locality.

I thence shaped my course towards St. Kilda, taking my way through a finely timbered tract of country, resembling a spacious English park without its avenues. The trees were sparsely distributed, with very few bunches of underwood, so that the views in every direction were long and uninterrupted. Crowded vehicles rattled along, and horsemen at mad speed darted past in great numbers, sometimes approaching in so point-blank a direction that I was frequently forced to stand plump up against the next tree to avoid being ridden down. I passed several mounds of discarded wardrobe, some not quite cold from the lateness of their occupation, but this I could account for without a cicerone, knowing that diggers prefer the bush as a robing-room, selecting the nearest suburb for that purpose, where, after donning their town

outfit, they abandon their digging habiliments—a custom, by-the-way, which has originated a colonial phase of "old clo' " trading in and about Melbourne. Seeing at some little distance a man, as I imagined, making his rural toilet, I took such a slant as I thought would bring me within good eye-range of him, but on approaching I clearly perceived he was under the influence of some strange eccentricity. He had taken off his coat and waistcoat, and, folding them with extreme precision, he laid them on the ground. He then pulled out his watch and hung it on a branch, and proceeded undressing most methodically until he was perfectly naked, by which time I was quite close to him; then, dividing the thicket with his hands, as if he was separating the curtains of a bed, he made a step upwards in the air, and stretched himself composedly on the ground. I looked round for some person to consult with before proceeding to disturb him, but as there was not any one just then within call, I ventured to intrude on his repose. He regarded me placidly at first, but when I pressed him for an explanation, he grumbled, looked savage, and then sprang at me, exclaiming, "Robber! murderer! thief!" and although he was not possessed of much strength, I felt awkward in the embrace of a lunatic, who thought biting, scratching, or gouging all fair, and who clang about me with his legs and arms as if he was immersed in water. I could not get him down without going down myself, and it required all the skill and watchfulness I could command to keep my nose and face out of range of his teeth and claws. Fortunately three young fellows came to my relief, and soon after two vehicles and a cluster of horsemen. As the number of strangers approached, my foe relaxed his hold, and, dropping to his feet, he looked round for a moment in wild amazement, and then darted away at great speed, running fully two hundred yards before one of the young pedestrians captured him. He became excessively violent in

talk and gesture, inflicting some ugly scratches on his captor, and resisting with great energy any attempt at dressing him. I explained the occurrence so far as I was concerned, and it was apparent to all that he was suffering from delirium tremens. An arrangement was then agreed to that the young men on foot should remain in charge while a horseman rode on to the police-station at St. Kilda to send one of the force to take charge of him, and I sauntered on towards St. Kilda.

Notwithstanding my morning's experiences and my midday adventures I reached my friend P——ns' at half-past four, and as the dinner hour was a fashionable one we walked out to explore the neighbourhood. The evening was still dry and clear, but another change of temperature supervened, which proved to me that the assertion as to having "a fair sample of four seasons in the same day" was founded on fact, for as we walked on the esplanade above the beech the chilling south wind was biting so keenly I could not keep my teeth from chattering.

St. Kilda is about three and a half miles from the city, on elevated ground washed by the bay waters on one side, and otherwise mostly surrounded by low lying wastes, which were flooded at the period of my visit. In 1853, there were a good many fine trees of a venerable stamp standing about, the last of their race, and several isolated residences without reference to order or future arrangement, as far as I could observe. There were a few olden villas and houses, neatly and substantially built of brick and stone, but by far the greater number were hastily run up of weather-boards without any intention of stability, merely to meet the inordinate demand for residences there at most inordinate rents. In the course of our walk I was pointed out a ludicrous instance of the instability of these mushroom edifices, erected

by a speculating landholder. It was a two-story wooden house, that upset as the family were enjoying themselves on the balcony on a fine evening, in which position it lay as I passed, torn up by the roots—the first house in a sound state I ever saw in a prostrate condition. Had I come across it without any explanation, I should have been as sadly puzzled to know for what it was intended (lying face under) as the unsophisticated husbandman at the agricultural show was to discover the use of an implement which turned out to be an inverted wheelbarrow.

As one of my fellow guests lived in his little office in the city, I had company home for the greater part of the way, and when we parted I took a line, as I supposed, direct for Emerald Hill. Feeling quite sure of the direction, I walked along with great confidence, but in perfect silence, for the country was said to be bristling with bushrangers, and a most sanguinary band infested the Brighton and St. Kilda district, committing the most unheard-of atrocities without any ostensible aim or object.

However, after a blindfolded ramble of some hours, I found myself on the beach close to Sandridge, where I felt much inclined to abide until daylight under a boat; but the rawness of the night air forbade repose, so I rambled through the village, and was almost tempted to feel the pulse of the doctor whose smoky red lamp was suspended from the ridge pole of a tattered tent. Second thoughts disapproved the intrusion, for my slight knowledge of human nature and professional discipline prefigured the reception I would be likely to meet from an M.D. roused from his bed by a postulant instead of a patient. I therefore followed up the joint-road track towards Melbourne, and when I came abreast of Emerald Hill I found out my domicile without difficulty about four o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

S——bs's Auction Mart—Business set to Music—The Jewish Persuasion—Row in the Auction-room—Profits in 1853—Champagne Lunch at St. Kilda—Auction Vultures—Spirited Bidding—Professional Advertising Manufacture—Specimen Advertisement—Fabulous Price of Land at that Period—Heavy Fall of Rain—Its Effect on the Streets—Their Appearance during the Flood and after its Subsidence—These Floods not to be arrested—Their Sanitary Effects counterbalance their Temporary Inconvenience—The Argus Dining-rooms—Their Ménage—Determine on going to the Theatre—Out-door Arrangements—In-door Appearances—The Audience described—How the Tragedy of "Hamlet" was played—Scenes and Incidents during the Performance—Strange Request made of Ophelia—Tim Jones's Speech and his Quaint Announcement—Colloquy between the Gravedigger and the other Diggers—Happy Conclusion—Scene at the Bar of the Public—Solemn Declaration.

The morning on which my brother's merchandise was to be disposed of by S——bs and Son, I directed my steps towards their rooms, and, on turning the corner of Queen-street, perceived, somewhat to my astonishment, an immense flag waving over the entrance, as well as a brass band in front of the door, splitting the air with all their might. Well knowing the *quid pro quo* mode of transacting all sorts of business in gold countries, I made sure that the orchestra would figure prominently in the account sales, while, as I observed, it was producing effects the very opposite to those for which I imagined it was employed. People on foot were certainly concentrating in the direction, but, curiously enough, all the omnibuses, gigs, and other vehicles which

rattled past me and pulled up in the immediate neighbourhood were wholly without passengers.

As I came close up, curious speculation was soon satisfied by the huge posters leaning on either side of Messrs. S——bs's portals and the placards pasted on the panels of the carriages, "announcing that immediately after the sale of merchandise free seats would be given to all parties wishing to partake of a champagne luncheon at St. Kilda," the invitation being cut off from all contact with trade by the vile parody—

> There is a transport in St. Kilda's Wood,
> There is a rapture in its sea-girt shores—

which occupied a bracket over a bald mass of straight lines, conveying anything rather than notions of transport or rapture, intended as a representation of "the first series of allotments for the erection of villa residences on the magnificent and picturesque property of T. B——d, Esq., without reserve."

When the hour arrived for putting up the merchandise, the brass band was equally divided in the numerous vehicles, which were despatched in opposite directions throughout the town, beating up for recruits, and the concourse clustered round the entrance to the auction mart retired into the interior, which, to an uninitiated person, might have been mistaken for a Jewish synagogue; for, during the loud excitement in the street, the Hebrew family congregated in a dense mass about the pulpit, perching themselves, too, on every elevated point or prominent position, so that the Christian community only occupied a very narrow rim of background in the throng. I never before saw such an overwhelming multitude of sharp nasal promontories and tawny visages, every dark eye glistening with anxiety and every pointed beak seemingly whetted for business; for

wherever clothes of any kind are in question, be they new or old, there do the descendants of Moses love to assemble; and whatever feelings of persecuted brotherism bind them together on other occasions, they seem to ignore creed, country, and relationship when running the scent of wearing apparel, and, like a pack of ravening wolves, they growl and tear each other into metaphorical pieces over a valueless lot of damaged baragon jackets put up to sale "for the benefit of whom it may concern." I never remarked them clamorous at land sales—though there is not any prohibition against their possessing themselves of real estate in the colony—nor in the sales of town property, except in so far as they required it for their own business locations; but in sales of merchandise, especially that appertaining to the external comfort or adornment of both sexes in the lower grades of fashion, they fairly outstrip and distance all competition. Most, if not all, of the Melbourne Jew clothiers have direct connexion with the great Houndsditch and other East London outfitters, and if any foreign importation comes upon the market, they buy it over the heads of all Christian competitors, at prices far beyond the limits of remuneration, so as to retain exclusive possession of the trade.

The boots and shoes in my brother's catalogue were a very dainty article, and much sought after, but the lots which most concentrated attention were the waterproof clothing, of which the market was quite bare, with the rainy season already set in. The samples exposed on the semi-circular counter were examined a thousand times over, every examiner laying them down with a look as much as to say, "You're mine if money can buy you;" but in a short interlude, caused by a sale of harness—an article in which Jews are not much interested—one of the tribe, more adventurous than his brethren, gained entrance into the penetralia behind

the pulpit, where I was standing with my brother, and possessed himself of the whole of the envied lots by an offer of one hundred and fifty per cent. on the invoice price, taking all risk, together with paying all costs and charges whatsoever, an offer which, under my advice, was accepted. After the harness was disposed of, there was a general cry, "Waterproofs! waterproofs! waterproofs!" accompanied with a rapping and stamping quite after the manner of calling for a popular song in a minor theatre, which became momentarily louder and more frequent, interspersed with the monosyllables "Sell! sell!" and "A do!" but these ebullitions increased to a tempest when the porters proceeded to remove the samples from the counter. I fancied there would have been a physical force demonstration from the frenzied manner in which "Damned sell!" "Cheat," "Swindle!" "Put up to sell bad boots!" &c. &c., were hurled at the auctioneer, and the minatory looks and gestures addressed in our direction. Mr. S——bs, after several pantomimic efforts, was at length allowed to explain the transaction, upon which the tumult was renewed, but took a new channel, having this time the lucky purchaser for its object of indignation. I really do believe, had he been caught at the moment in the body of the room, he would not have escaped with a simple bonneting, so great were the indications of savage rage which prevailed amongst the disappointed multitude. Taking the waterproof clothing, the boots and shoes, the harness and saddlery, the fire-arms, and hardware together, they realised a clear profit of one hundred and thirty-three per cent. above all charges, and had we made a good passage, say of ninety days instead of one hundred and thirty-two, there is no doubt they would have fetched much more. There was a friend of mine present, who came out a year before me with the intention of pur-

chasing a station, taking with him 8000*l.*, which I advised him to invest in similar goods. If he had done so he would have augmented his capital to at least 20,000*l.*, for those articles were selling at truly fabulous rates early in 1852. But having no idea of trade or business, he preferred, in a true John Bull spirit, to take out Bank of England notes, which, like the British flag, he imagined would pass current in any corner of the globe; however, he found out too late that his Victorian cousins were wanting enough in proper respect for home institutions to charge a discount of seven and a half per cent., or 600*l.* on the amount, so that instead of a profit of 12,000*l.* he secured a loss of 600*l.*

As the goods auction commenced at ten o'clock sharp, the whole assemblage were ready to start for the champagne luncheon at half-past twelve o'clock. The vehicles were quickly filled, an omnibus, with half the band and a land pilot, having been despatched some time before to take up their stand on the spot and play at the top of their bent as a means of attracting all within earshot, a proceeding very generally understood, for the crash of music in the Bush as surely told of a land sale as the intermitting cry of hounds in cover did of a hunt meeting in the neighbourhood. When the cavalcade got into motion it was joined by several private gigs and tax-carts, and at intervals by troops of outriders, so that by the time we got clear of the town there was really a large muster, which, to a stranger, was not without its effect, winding through the grand natural park-land along the large sheets of water between the city and St. Kilda, for in those days there was no regular line of road whatever in that direction. Ascending the rising ground, which may now be termed the heart of St. Kilda, the music on the scene of auction was distinctly heard from an opposite knoll beyond, and through the bare stems of the trees it was easy

to see that a considerable crowd was assembled on the ground, agreeably diversified by the presence of ladies and good-looking nursemaids, in quite as gay attire as their mistresses, and assuming airs of sauciness meant for colonial independence.

Driving through a belt of fine timber, there was an open space on the very crown of the eminence—level, green, and velvety—certainly a most inviting location for settling down on, commanding, as it did, pretty snatches of view of the bay to the south-east, in which direction the timber was thin and scattered. In the centre there was a large marquee, looped up all round, and under it a spacious table, filling its entire area, laden with a most tempting variety of edibles, but as if, in rigid conformity with the invitation, exclusively confined to champagne as an article of drink. There were ten or a dozen attendants in their shirt-sleeves, walking quickly to and fro in a cleared space around the marquee, rasping great carving-knives over great steels, as I supposed to improve their efficiency, but in reality, as I subsequently learned, to keep at bay a pack of ravening loafers, who were notorious for attending the preliminary performances even of the most remote land sales with a punctuality worthy of a better cause. Like Cornish wreckers, or birds of prey, who intuitively assemble round stranded ships or wounded buffaloes, they invariably made their appearance wherever the auctioneer's marquee arose, watching on the spring for the signal of attack, and diminishing the radius of their circle with insensible stealthiness.

When all the company alighted, Mr. S——bs, with an urbanity for which he was remarkable, made an arrangement for the ladies in the omnibuses, and then led his best-established bidders into the cleared circle; but the first clash of cutlery annihilated all order, arrangement, or precedency,

and a tumultuous mêlée ensued, continuing until the wreckers secured each a portion of prey, and retired to the background to devour it, with the aid of a bottle of champagne, which each became speedily possessed of. In fact, everybody on the ground held a bottle in his grasp, and Mr. S——bs, with his recording angel, ascended the driving-box of an omnibus similarly provided. This was a signal for a fusillade of corks followed by effervescent compliments to the presiding genius, who acknowledged them graciously and toasted the ladies in becoming terms. He then prefaced the proceeding by a comprehensive toast, embracing every resource, pursuit, and calling in the colony. His assistant next followed by reading the terms of sale, the dry details of which were relieved by another generous libation, and Lot No. 1 was then launched upon the market in a flood of sparkling eulogy, at the nominal price of 1*l.* per foot, advancing at rapid half-sovereign strides to a figure which would appear absurd even for the superficies of Hyde Park, with a frontage to the Serpentine. The lucky purchaser's fortune was, of course, copiously celebrated, and Lots 2, 3, 4 were successively started, the last, under the fortuitous influence of a timely pop of the favourite beverage, heading the bidding amidst loud cheers. A few fancy corner allotments were then introduced, led forward like blushing damsels conscious of their superior attraction, causing quite a buzz and crush of excitement around the rostrum; but before they were formally presented to the admiring throng, a special libation in their honour was proposed, and was most enthusiastically responded to on all sides. The fever was now at its height, and ere Mr. S——bs could catch a pause, he was anticipated by an ardent individual who started the biddings at 5*l.*, every further advance being announced in duplicate from the pulpit, the hammer finally coming

down to a bid that was claimed by three. This led to a fresh start and renewed competition, which almost caused me to question the *bona fides* of the entire proceedings, so outrageously extravagant were the prices realised, so far beyond any parallel in the annals of history or any rational prospect of reimbursement. In fact, if New Holland was no bigger than the Isle of Wight, and its whole foundation consisted of a substratum of gold freckled with Kohinoors, their rates could not have been in excess of the prices paid that day for ordinary land, four miles in the Bush, without any road to approach it, or any immediate attractions to enhance its value. Yet this identical land—portions of it at least—to my knowledge, were resold at a profit, as was most of the land sold at the highest rates of 1853, that was not overheld beyond the following February, for the tide of gold discovery was still in full flood, the demand for every description of import unabated, the profits prodigious, and unbounded wealth apparently in the possession of everybody, without any idea that the current of prosperity was ever destined to turn. Scepticism was a feeling not then recognised in the colony. The man who halted, or doubted, was set down as a fool or a dullard. Progress was the universal creed, and "Advance, Victoria!" the favourite motto of public writers and speakers—one especially appropriated by owners, dealers, or speculators in land, and a pet heading patronised by the school of melodramatic advertisement composers, which arose at that period in Melbourne, constituting a species of profession, for, like Lord Byron's pastrycook, with her poet in keeping, every auction establishment felt it a duty to have one of these geniuses on the staff to concoct florid nonsense in ludicrous imitation of George Robins's style. Let me annex a sample, sanctioned by the name of a well-known auctioneer, and leave my readers to judge of the gullibility'

or the ideas of gullibility, which then prevailed in the colony of Victoria:

"Advance, Victoria!"

"'Tis sweet to peep through the loopholes of retreat upon the busy world."

To Retired or Active Merchants, Government and Professional Men, Storekeepers, Diggers, or others.

Delightful Cottage Residence, only five minutes' ride by railway from Melbourne.

W. F. Westall has to dispose of one of the most complete Cottage Residences within an equal distance of Melbourne, together with two Five-roomed Cottages and a piece of land, let together at 80*l.* per annum.

The principal portion of the property now offered consists of an addition to the above; a most neat and substantial cottage standing in the centre of its own grounds, and contains four convenient-sized rooms, with lobby. A verandah five feet in width surrounds the entire cottage, upon which the vine and numerous other creepers twine in graceful luxuriance, while a parterre of beautiful flowers fills up the foreground. A detached kitchen, servant's bed-room, and scullery complete the domestic offices; also a fowl-house and aviary, with sufficient unoccupied land on which to erect a coach-house and stable. The back windows of the cottage command extensive views of the Bush, and the plume-boarded beach lying between St. Kilda and Brighton, while that bold promontory, the Red Bluff, Pic-Nic Point, with Mount Eliza in the distance, charm the scene.

The bay and harbour of Port Phillip, bearing on their waters the stately ships of many climes, bringing the world's merchandise to this El Dorado of ours, give new and charming features to the scene. The arrangements of this "Gem of Emerald" are so complete, that it must be the fault of the occupier if comfort, peace, and happiness in their widest sense do not reign throughout the entire establishment. In fact, this desirable property must be seen to be duly appreciated.

A friend, in an impromptu on the beauty of the spot, writes as follows:

"By the fair eyes of Flora sweet flowers are seen
To surround the retreat of their lord and their queen;
In tasteful luxuriance their sweets they disclose,
As a tribute of thanks for such peaceful repose."

For particulars and cards to view, apply to W. F. Westall, on and after Monday, at his office, 7, Mincing-lane, Flinders-street, West.

In the sales of private property, the terms of sale were always temptingly liberal, framed with the intention of inviting speculation, for, where money was in such general

requisition, with so many opportunities of putting it out to fructify to advantage, even the large capitalists bought with more avidity under small immediate cash instalments and long-dated bills, while the mere speculator, with means almost limited to the first cash payment, invested for a rise, hoping either to sell before the first bill came to maturity or to be in a position to raise sufficient funds to meet it by pawning his prospects *in futuro*.

During my return drive to town, in a down-pouring deluge, I heard divers and sundry stories told, and instances specified, of the fortunes made in land speculations, and the enormous profits extracted out of small patches of ground in incredibly short spaces of time. A very notable one was a single acre at South Yarra, sold in the early part of 1851 for 30*l*., resold in January, 1852, for 400*l*., purchased a few months afterwards by Major D—d—n for 1000*l*., and subsequently disposed of by him at 2500*l*. I could fill chapters with equally well-authenticated instances, illustrative of the wild and widespread mania for land speculation which then prevailed in Victoria, imbuing the impulsive and weak-minded with a species of frenzy, and even infecting sober, thoughtful, and calculating citizens with a morbid craving, which committed them to bargains that they were conscious were ruinous, resembling the morbid appetite that persists in swallowing clay, even though it produces the pangs of disease and indigestion. I ascertained there was to be a Government land sale the following day at Messrs. T——t's, the Government auctioneers, previous to which a much-coveted paddock at St. Kilda was to be brought to the hammer. The advertisement caused an immense sensation, if I might be permitted to judge from the excited state of my omnibus companions, who predicted a strife of competition altogether unequalled, the sale being known to be *bonâ fide*,

as the proprietor was making arrangements to leave for England. I may here remark, that the Government auctioneers had a decided advantage in disposing of pet sections of this kind over all their brethren, as the public land sales were always sure to attract the fullest attendance both of town and country speculators,—city, suburban, and country allotments being so judiciously mixed up together in the monthly programme. Thus, while some chartered steamers to cross to Williamstown or to ascend the Salt-water River, and others hired omnibuses to take thirsty crowds to the inland districts, Messrs. T——t sold the allotments over the counter, from hard-featured maps, without the stimulating agency of champagne, by adroitly taking advantage of their monthly levees, saving by it, too, much of their own valuable time, as well as the immense drawback from their clients in the shape of expenses. Although I had arranged to start for Geelong, en route to Ballarat, on the morrow afternoon, I resolved to attend the Government sale and witness the land fight over the St. Kilda paddock.

The rain continued to fall in streaming torrents as we pulled up at our destination, the Bull and Mouth, where the flickering champagne excitement was supplemented by stiff potations of brandy. Not having an overcoat, I was constrained to remain in the shelter, a witness, for the second time, of the never-ceasing scenes of drunken excess in that establishment. I was still a rain-bound prisoner when the shades of evening thickened, and I therefore determined on dining in town, and visiting the theatre, where I saw there was to be a special performance, "under distinguished patronage," which, though not specially set forth, was understood to be a troop of particularly lucky diggers from the famous Eagle Hawk Gully, Bendigo. I was advised by one of my auction friends to try new dining-rooms just opened in

Great Collins-street, called the Argus Dining-rooms, from their contiguity to the office of that journal; and about five o'clock, when the rain ceased, with a suddenness as if the valve of a shower-bath was let fall, I walked out to witness a scene not to be equalled in any other city in the world. Swanston-street on the one hand, and Elizabeth-street on the other, were complete rivers, running in volumes, and with a velocity that was startling to look at, and perfectly impossible to cross with safety on foot. In the deep and wide-sloping side channels especially, the current was so impetuous that it made one giddy to gaze at it as it roared past, empty cases, coffee tins, old hats, sardine boxes, discarded clothes, tattered mats, butchers' offal, and all the varieties of household filth and warehouse abomination hoarded since the previous flood, careering frantically on its bosom. I saw a fine horse—one of a waggon team—drowned, beyond the possibility of aid, at the crossing in front of the Post-office, being taken off his legs, partly by fright and partly by the force of a collision from a floating mass such as I describe; and as by the accident the ponderous waggon was brought to a stand in the centre of the torrent, its wheels got rapidly choked with garbage, causing the angry waters to surge up against the body with such force that I momentarily expected to see it overturned. After a period there was a marked subsidence; when the centres of the streets became exposed, presenting a blue surface as clean as if they had been washed with a scrubbing-brush, but marked by a beach line of stranded odds-and-ends, not at all sightly to contemplate. The water-bound citizens then commenced crossing on drays at a shilling a head, and sporting diggers, like so many Meltonians charging the Whissendene, might be seen in full flight, dashing at those shrunken municipal brooks, but getting more frequently in than over. The next movement observable was an attempt

on the part of enterprising shopkeepers to establish dry foot-crossings by means of pieces of plank or quartering stretched from the kerbstones to the street—rickety bridgeways, which the impatience of delay caused many people rashly to venture on, producing infinite amusement from the strange varieties of ludicrous accidents they encountered.

These floods recur frequently during the winter, and are one of the infirmities of which Melbourne can never be effectually cured, from the peculiarities of its position. Elizabeth and Swanston streets run parallel to each other north and south, being nearly level their entire length; the former receiving the entire drainage of the western heights, by which it is flanked from end to end, the latter being circumstanced precisely in a similar manner with regard to the hills on the eastern slope, and both being so little above the level of the Yarra as to preclude the possibility of underground sewerage. Should the plan I proposed to the Chamber of Commerce—which I shall allude to hereafter—for shortening the tortuous course of the Yarra to the bay be carried out in its entirety, I make no doubt but that the sewerage and drainage of the city may be improved; but I think it requires no great degree of scientific acumen to see that it is beyond the scope of engineering ingenuity to place Melbourne in the category of well-drained cities, according to the Old World acceptation. However, though Melbourne floods are phenomena in their way, and formidable in aspect while in full sweep, they are of short duration, and render an amount of sanitary service in their brief career which more than compensates for their temporary inconvenience.

I found the new dining-rooms a great improvement on the first I tried, in every respect but the space allowed and the complexion of the damask. The company at each table was so packed that carving was a matter of extreme diffi-

culty, and the morsels were got to the mouths as if all the elbows had stiff joints. The state of the table linen again, on the making-a-virtue-of-necessity principle, was not made a subject of comment, although by a slight effort of imagination the cloth off which my party dined might have been taken for a faithful photograph of a leopard-skin, only that some of the larger spots were in a state of liquidity. But even these, so far from being turned into topics of complaint, were converted to the general accommodation, for I observed more than one man of the world help himself to mustard from a large globule on the cloth, and I would not swear that I did not see a nonchalant digger take a careful bread sop from a succulent gravy-stain just opposite me. On the other hand, the cooking was respectable, and the portions liberal in all respects save the vegetable adjuncts; but with potatoes at 6d. per pound, and cabbages "the divil," as a countryman of mine remarked, this was not to be wondered at. The Argus had not a license, so that the drinks had to be paid for in advance, which gave me an opportunity of learning that champagne—if I may be permitted to call it so—rated at 17s. 6d. per flask, and ale and porter at 2s. 6d. per bottle—all change to be taken in cigars. There were no waiter rates, nor had the servant-tax in any shape taken root in the colony.

I found, during dinner, that several of the parties present intended going to the theatre, so I waited for the most respectable convoy that was formed, and went to see how the Royal Dane was represented at the antipodes. The evening was very dark and dank, and the streets apparently deserted; but there were murmurs of voices in the direction of Queen-street, and a lurid halo in the sky, which denoted by a murky irradiation where the magnet of the night was situated. Cabs and carriages too rattled towards that point, so that

there was no mistaking the way. On making the turn out of Bourke-street, one would have supposed it was to have been an out-door representation, in the Champs Elysées fashion, from the crowd and the glare of light which was blown about from a number of cans of fat and rags, which did duty as gas-lamps; but these I found to be indispensable, to enable the patrons of the drama to distinguish the lines of boards and stepping-stones which led from the hard street through the mud to the doorways of the temple of Thespis. A great many votaries, however, despising these imitations of gentility, showed their contempt of them by wading deliberately through the slush; others, in a less discerning state, using them alternately. The carriage folk had a special plank, which was altogether insufficient, for the vehicles, like so many Trojan horses, each contained a host, reminding me too of the hats from which conjurors keep pulling out an unlimited succession of cocks and cabbages; and when you would be ready to make oath that the last person had emerged, a compressed digger would come out of a corner with a bundle of rumpled satin in his arms, and failing to "walk the plank," would carry it in triumph through the knee-deep mire to the dress-circle entrance, while some of the more distinguées dames, with the right or privilege of "private entrée," conducted their admirers through the bar of the adjoining tap, where, as a matter of course, there was sure to be "a champagne shout" for the company.

I made my way to the pit as the place from which I could have the most comprehensive survey of the house and stage, paying 5s. into an aperture which smelled like the bunghole of an empty brandy-butt, and getting in return a disfigured penny piece as a pass, which I handed to a corrugated Amazon smoking a black pipe, who looked contemptuously at my

over-decent appearance. As I got into the body of the house, I found the chandelier overcast by a dark cloud of tobacco-smoke, and I fancied I could, at intervals, detect the tones of a cracked flageolet, a screaming violin, and a flabby drum through the tumult of voices above and around me. The pit was apparently filled with pert gents, fast tradesmen, and mechanics, some few with their colonial wives, but no children. The dress circle was crammed beyond sitting posture with florid-looking women in too low satin dresses, some in their smeared hair, with their pinned bonnets dangling in front of the boxes; others crowned with tiaras like rose-bushes in full bearing, and all hung round with chains, watches, collars, and bracelets of most ponderous manufacture. Their lords-in-waiting were habited either in tartan jumpers or red worsted shirts, smoking short pipes, and indulging in indelicate attentions, which frequently "brought down the house" before the rising of the curtain. I saw several pendant samples of the style of dress-boot in fashion as Eagle Hawk swells got astride the leaning cushions, and heard several cordial recognitions, such as, "Damn your bloody eyes, Bill, is that you?" or, "Poll, may me beer-can, how's your coppers?" shouted from side to side. The upper tier, as well as I could judge, held more of a medley audience. The shrieking Bedouins of the streets mustering strongly, often in the capacity of bear leaders to stock riders from the interior, and cicerones to a heavy class of digger, who gaped and stared in hiccuping admiration at nothing in particular, damning by turns every portion of his internal anatomy, from the liver all round, "if ever he seed nothin' like it never afore." There were also groups of sailors with their Dulcineas, who, judging from external appearance, were the femmes de chambre of ladies beneath them, sporting their cast-off satins, which retained the grease stains much better

than the original dyes in the washing; and if they were not over encumbered with jewellery, they could boast instead a species of facial ornamentation not usually put on with a brush. There was a tumultuous uproar all the time without any lull whatever, made up of all sorts of discordant yells, noises, and exclamations, original and imitative together, with a stamping and thumping which caused the chandelier to quiver; but in the midst of the hurricane a man in the pit was seen to stand up on his seat with his back to the orchestra, and gesticulate earnestly, as if to obtain a hearing. At first his object was misunderstood, and he was variously suggested as a "target for an empty bottle," or a "subject for cowhiding," or an "ambassador to the infernal regions;" but there was a certain pertinacious suavity about him which at length induced a still silence, and extracted from him a profound bow. He then said: "Ladies and gemmen, I thank you for your kindness—I am, in fact, obliged to you. (Loud cheers.) I suppose you all recollect me; if not, I beg to inform you I am Tim Jones, who kept the shavin'-shop in Flinder's-lane. (Applause.) I'm just come from the famous Eagle Hawk, where I dug up one hundred and fifty ounces; and I'll be damned for the future if ever I'll shave another b—— of the lot of ye." (Thunders of applause.) ("Bravo, Tim! what'll you take?") And a tempest of other tender inquiries followed, in the midst of which the curtain rose, but Bernardo, Marcellus, and Horatio failed to divide attention with Tim Jones until the Ghost made his appearance in an outré rig, almost as comical as Wright's in "Paul Pry;" then, indeed, there was a roar of laughter, accompanied by shouts of "Well, I'm blowed!" "Holy Moses!" "Does your mother know you're out?" enough to try the gravity of a real dead ghost nineteen centuries old. Marcellus first, then Horatio, and finally the Ghost, came to the

foot-lights with great obsequiousness, but poor Tom Steele himself, the Head Pacificator of Ould Ireland, could not allay the uproar; so the scene and the act proceeded in dumb show amidst immense applause.

The first interval was enlivened by renewed pleasantries, explosions of champagne, and demands for nobblers, which were ministered with wonderful assiduity, to the total exclusion of oranges and soda-water. Toasts were given in the pit, and warmly responded to from the gallery, and healths were interchanged in regular digger vernacular across the house. The second act commenced without its being apparently noticed until the entrance of Ophelia, which was the signal for a tempest of clapping and savoury compliments, that admitted of no intermission until the King and Queen with their train stalked in, when they were greeted with ironical applause and Victorian doubles ententes, provoking bursts of general laughter, during which an enthusiastic god was so impressed with the jolly-good-fellowness of the King, that he sent him down a bottle of brandy by the thong of a stock-whip from the gallery. So that the second act of the Stratford chef d'œuvre was wound up by an exchange of hob-nobbing between the house and the stage. The third act was transformed into a most amusing colloquy between the Danish Grave-digger and the gold-diggers from Eagle Hawk, made up of mutual inquiries about the depth of the sinking, and the return to the tub, which so tickled Hamlet that he gave up the soliloquy and joined in the joking. After this there was a fierce row caused by the accidental falling of a brandy-bottle from the gallery into the pit, but which was resented as an intentional occurrence. There was at first an attempt made to go round and attack the gods in the rear, and then an escalade was essayed, in which two sailors succeeded in climbing up the pillars which sustain the boxes,

but instead of a display of bloody hostilities, a festive scene ensued, which soon spread into a regular epidemic, during which brandy-bottles were let down and others hoisted up by ropes made of handkerchiefs, amidst a tempest of toasts, sentiments, and hip, hip, hurrahs. The manager at length came forward to invoke a hearing, but nobody seemed aware of his presence. Then poor Ophelia, with straws in her hair, endeavoured to bring the lunatics to reason, and after a world of curtseying, she induced a pause, but as she was about uttering the first word of remonstrance, a riotous sailor roared out, "Come, give us 'Black-eyed Susan,' old gal!" which produced such an unconquerable relapse, there was no alternative but cut down the remainder of the performance to the last scene, where the poisonings and sword practice brought the performance to an agreeable conclusion. But Hamlet, Ophelia, and the Ghost, in undress, were obliged to appear before the foot-lights to bear a pelting shower of nuggets—a substitute for bouquets—many over half an ounce, and several of which fell short of the mark into the orchestra.

Not caring to wait for the afterpiece, I managed, by crushing and squeezing, to get out, and round to the bar, with a great appetite for a brandy spider, but there I was stopped again by a dense throng guzzling champagne at the command of a half-drunken digger of decent mien and appearance, who, in my presence, "shouted" two dozen, remarking to his guests, as he was throwing down sheaves of notes in payment, "Drink on, my boys; I'm only a poor digger from Ballarat."

I have no doubt but my description of the scenes in the theatre will be set down as extravagant invention, but I protest most solemnly that the reverse is the contrary; my painting is tame and colourless as compared with the reality, which would puzzle the pen of a Martin Chuzzlewit to depict

in its true light. And as to the pelting of nuggets at theatres, circuses, Salles Valentino, it was so common a thing in 1853 in Melbourne, that the porters and sweepers were often known to gather ounces of the precious metal which were scattered about after a popular performance.

CHAPTER X.

Emigrant Rag Fair—Its Success and Abolition—Large Admixture of the Celtic Element—Their Industry and Morality—Government Land Sale Reunion—Big Clarke, his Character and Possessions—First Lesson on the Land Question—Squatters, their Use and Abuse—Their absurd Demands for Compensation—Melbourne Prices for Houses and Lands—16,800*l.* for one Acre—A Contested Election for the City—Tameness of the Scene—Contrast between it and an Irish Contest—Scenes on board the Geelong Steam-boat—Mode of going to the Theatre in Geelong in 1853—My Mishap—My sleeping Neighbours—Their Explanation to prevent Misconception—My Dreams.

Coming across the ferry next morning, to attend the Government land sale, I observed a large crowd in front of the Custom-house, towards which people were hurrying from all directions. I therefore hastened forward to join the congregation, making sure of witnessing something novel and interesting. It proved to be a new and ingenious device, adopted by a newly-arrived crowd of emigrants, for getting rid of the superfluities "not wanted on the voyage" or required on shore. On landing their luggage, and comparing the rates of cart hire, and store rent, with its intrinsic value, they very prudently came to the prompt resolution of offering it for sale, and abandoning whatever they could not dispose of. In conformity with this plan, an impromptu bazaar was planned and opened, the boxes containing the indispensable necessaries being arranged in lines as benches, on which the "not wanted" were placed in double rows back to back, with

upturned lids, strewed with the contents, so that in passing along each row the merchandise was fully exposed for inspection. There was really a brisk and remunerative trade doing, much to the disgust of some groups of unwashed Jews, who regarded the whole proceeding as an unwarrantable encroachment on their peculiar manor, and very much to the grief of the female emigrants, who could not restrain their sorrow nor repress their tears on seeing the grinning stranger carrying away in triumph a good home-made blanket, every thread of which was spun by their own fingers, or a bunch of warm stockings of their own knitting, intended as a present for the good brother who remitted the passage-money for the entire family. Even Pat himself, when his price (much to his astonishment) was come to for a few pairs of stout brogues, made to order by the village cobbler, stole a sorrowful scratch at the back of his head, and took a last look at them with a moist eye ere he tossed them over to the purchaser. But "sorra use in life" was there in admiring the grey frieze coat with the long skirts and steel buttons; you might as well try to lure the Arab barb from the Bedouin as coax that garb from my Connaught countryman.

A new feature was soon after introduced with excellent effect—that of the auction system—in which I was informed some of my untaught Milesian cousins evinced a tact in fencing and knocking down, which could only be accounted for by their intuitive skill in the use of the shillelagh. However, here again the envious Jews stepped in, compelling the passive authorities to repress the practice of unlicensed auctioneering. They also went the length of erecting booths adjoining this antipodean Rag Fair, creating rows and fomenting disturbances to such an extent that Go-

vernment were left no choice but abolish the market altogether.

During my short colonial experience I was much surprised at finding so large a proportion of the Irish leaven in the population, which, previous to the gold digging, I always understood was three-fourths Scotch, with a good dash of English besides, in its lower and even secondary ranks. And the surprise was no more than natural, knowing as I did the alluring attractions held out by America to Irish emigrants—firstly, in the extraordinary cheapness of the rate and shortness of the passage; secondly, in the low price and easy acquirement of land; and thirdly, in the witching lures of consanguinity so inherent in Celtic bosoms. But, notwithstanding these advantages, and the discouragements of a voyage over five times as long and five times as costly, thousands of Irish poured in, independently of those who came out as free emigrants, all of whom were absorbed, or found profitable occupations immediately after arrival, few, if any, contributing to swell the ranks of those discontented grumblers who were most eloquent when cursing the colony, because they could not find gold on the surface, and who were always sure to be found sunning themselves lazily in the vicinity of the labour market, or propping up the portals of the lowest class of public-houses. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the fact that any change from the impoverished and degraded condition of the Irish peasant on his native soil must necessarily have been one for the better, and that therefore, on arrival, he was only too glad to embrace the first opportunity that presented itself. However, whatever the reason, all impartial observers will agree, and statistics will bear me out in the assertion, that Irishmen constituted a very small proportion of the loafing

population, or of the criminal crowd that filled the gaols and asylums, while I may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the proverbial chastity of the Irish female was nobly sustained by those poor girls who found themselves standing alone, without parents or protectors, in the midst of the staring contaminations of the Victorian metropolis.

I reached T——t's auction-room fully an hour before the preliminary proceedings commenced, and found a large concourse of eager people already congregated, amongst whom were to be seen the leading notabilities of the day, in every rank, grade, and calling, for professors, traders, mechanics, squatters, and even day-labourers, made it a point of attending these monthly reunions; the wealthy few to purchase up the whole of the scant supply for speculative purposes, the moderately endowed to grumble at the impossibility of obtaining the smallest patch for a homestead, and to foster the cry — then breaking the shell—of "Unlock the lands!" When a very young man, on my first visit to London, I remember that my most importunate desire was to rush to the Stock Exchange, and get a full-length portrait of that "man made of money," the auriferous Rothschild, but I very much doubt if my remembrance will venture to maintain that my anxiety to feast my eyes on the "landed leviathan," Big Clarke,* was not fully as intense. I had no difficulty in finding him. Big and burly, with bushy eyebrows, and a snub nose of the middle stature, scarcely projecting more than a short black pipe of the true "dudheen breed," through which he was said to draw in and exhale the very breath of his existence. A passing observer would

* Mr. Clarke will excuse my familiarity in calling him by his invariable title. It is not used in disrespect, and although it is not an emanation of royal favour, I am much mistaken if it does not live in history. In no other instance of private reference will I again depart from the practice of using only the initial and terminal letter of any name referred to.

pronounce him an ugly man, but, with all his irregularity of features, I do not think so, for there is an anxious mobility always playing about them which relieves their grotesqueness. Ugliness, I conceive, is not so much a matter of physiognomy as of mental expression; a Phidian face can assume the lineaments of a demon or a satyr from the reflexion of a malicious or deformed mind, whereas the Numidian platter, lit up from within by good-humour and benevolence, can look pleasing, nay, on occasion, captivating. But to return to Big Clarke: without going into minute analysis, I will say that his whole aspect goes to prove the exception to the general rule by which sagacity and foresight are detected, for, looking at his small, retired, twinkling eye, you would give him credit for being sharp, quick, and cunning, without ever conjecturing that the head which contained them could be capable of profound thought or grand conceptions; yet there are few heads in the southern hemisphere to compare with it, and those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance are fond of quoting poor Oliver's couplet in reference to it:

> The people asked, and still the wonder grew
> How one small head could carry all he knew.

But the wonder which most impressively laid hold of me—for, to a limited extent, I was an acquaintance—was the clear, forcible, and apposite language in which he delivered his opinions, the sound, natural logic with which he sustained his arguments, and the clear, able, and comprehensive views he could enunciate on the most abstruse and complicated financial questions, all unlearned, as he admitted himself to be, according to the discipline of the schools. But his fine inborn ability stands him in stead of scholastic acquirements, and even in technical and professional matters

he is able to manage his worldly business without the intervention of the lawyer, the surveyor, or the actuary. He can draft his own deeds and leases, he can survey and apportion his own lands, and work out his own calculations without error and difficulty; and if—as a great authority* held—success be the most unerring test of ability, Big Clarke is undoubtedly an able man, for, in a long and original career, it can be justly said of him, "Nihil tetigit quod non . . ."—he never made a mistake of any magnitude. He often stepped boldly in where others feared to tread from narrowness of comprehension, and carried off a rich and glittering prize; and, as a summing-up proof of his energy and talents, it is only necessary to say, that although he attained the middle age of life still a struggling man, with moderate means, he is now, in the prime of mellowed manhood, at the head of princely possessions and unbounded wealth, the Crœsus of the southern hemisphere, who, without any miserly propensities,† does not spend the income of a second-rate English squire, and who, should he live to a green old age, in the possession of his faculties, will bequeath to his heirs a breadth of territory, an accumulation of treasure, very rarely surpassed in the annals of the world.

I got my first lesson on the great land question in front of T——t's auction mart, and if I failed to comprehend it, it was certainly my fault, for I heard it discussed in various

* O'Connell.

† Mr. Clarke, like all successful men, has his enemies, and his delight in imputing to him the miser's vice, because, forsooth, he does not keep an establishment or establishments in accordance with his means—an utter impossibility. Mr. Clarke could not ape the Duke of Sutherland if he would, no more than the Duke could imitate Mr. Clarke. Mr. Clarke, bred and living an humble man for forty years of his life, is now content to aspire to the rank of a plain country gentleman for the remainder of his career. He is neither profuse nor niggardly. He does not deny aid to a deserving friend in distress, nor assistance to him on legitimate enterprise; neither is he obdurate to the demands of "melting charity."

shapes, turned over, and rediscussed by sellers and buyers, casuists and sophists, special pleaders and plain dealers, land sharks and communists. I formed my opinions early in the debate as a follower of the picklocks, but I remarked at the time that, for the most part, the polemics on my side wandered from their grand text, "Unlock the lands," and that they misconceived or misrepresented the unapproachable position of the unoccupied territory, while they injudiciously clamoured for an immediate and impossible consummation of the question. They argued and pretended to believe that the Government of the day was averse from alienating the crown lands from selfish and oligarchical ideas, intent on discouraging any rush of immigration that might lead to the creation of a class of independent yeomen imbued with democratic opinions, who would war against aristocratic pretension and regal supremacy; whereas the true and palpable state of the case was, the Government, filled with a sincere anxiety to bring quantities of land to market in order to supplement an insufficient revenue, was unable to do so from the state of the survey staff, dwindled down as it was by desertions to the gold-fields, and unrecruited by new arrivals. It could not possibly meet the inordinate demand which suddenly sprang up unless it threw the whole territory open to individual selection, allowing the pastoral or agricultural settler to pick out his farm and plant his homestead, perhaps on the surface of a gold-field. Although the land radicals, at an early period in the career of the colony, initiated a crusade against squatting usurpation and monopoly, under their veteran leader John Pascoe Fawkner, I should suppose that they had lately become reconciled to their continuance, for in all the fierce discussions I heard I could not help remarking that the squatters were never dragged in invidiously. The abolition of squatterdom and

unlocking the lands was not regarded as cause and effect. The illimitable extent of unoccupied territory was thoroughly known and understood as over-aboundingly sufficient to meet all the *bonâ fide* demand for land that could possibly arise for years without encroaching on the runs of the squatters, and the voice of the people, in connexion with the thunders of the press, were more disposed to hold the Government amenable for the short supply than attribute any culpability to the squatters. In fact, if squatters were regarded as a conventional, they were accepted as a necessary evil, without which the progress of settlement could neither have been extended or expedited. The plough, in the tedious gradations of generation after generation, might have supplanted the vegetation of nature in the alluvial meadows of the vale of Yarra, or in the fertile plains through which the Lodden and the Campaspie meander, but the grassy steppes of the distant Wimnera, the remote regions of Gipps Land, the rich valleys of Lake Meo in the north-east, and those of Colac in the south-west, and the measureless bush-encircled districts of the fertilising Murray, would have been still a sealed wilderness only for the squatter. As an agricultural country, Port Phillip might have held a small, peaceful, happy community of robust farmers, with rosy cheeks and good digestions, a few steps higher in the social ladder than the Pitcairn Islanders, who would raise their own food, dress in domestic manufacture, hear of the world now and then from a crippled whaler, and, like the Shetlanders of old, most probably keep offering up prayers for the long life of a defunct sovereign, even after the birth of an heir-apparent to his successor. But only for squatter wool, and squatter hides, and squatter tallow, where would have been the exports of Port Phillip prior to the discovery of gold? Would the plough have turned up gold on its moulding-board, and,

if it did, would the scant resources of a small farming community have supplied food to an irruption of two hundred thousand diggers?

This was a state of things perfectly well understood, and to a certain extent appreciated, accounting, as I supposed, for the exemption of the squatters from being mixed up in the discussions of the question; and it is my positive conviction, if they demeaned themselves with reason and decency, taking no more than fair, legitimate advantage of their position, and the splendid opportunity presented by the new order of events for accumulating fortunes, they would have been a popular rather than a tabooed class. But they presented themselves as a modern exemplification of the axiom which asserts the invariable difficulty of bearing prosperity with propriety. Before the gold discoveries, failing to find consumers for their sheep at half-a-crown, or their bullocks at 3*l.* a head, they were at the trouble and cost of boiling them down, to strip their bones and extract their tallow. Wanting a market for their horses, which multiplied in a state of nature in the Bush, they took advantage of an occasional ship bound for India to transport some batches to that country. But although the diggers raised the value of even scabby sheep to 1*l.*, and beeves in proportion, creating at the same time a boundless demand, at the most unprecedented prices, for horses and working bullocks, the squatters had the unblushing impudence to proclaim their ruin aloud in terms of the most shameless mendacity. They exalted their own pretensions to national sympathy on a system of antipodean mythology specially framed to accord with the marvellous amount of compensation they demanded for the trespass of the digger on their undefined domains. They denounced him as a ruffian intruder, and while they accepted the magical enhancement

which attended his advent, they demanded three millions sterling as a reimbursement for the fabulous damages they sustained by his presence.

Three millions sterling was the modest amount computed by an assemblage of delegates, who elaborated their calculations at the Port Phillip Club Hotel. Three millions sterling were the recognisances under which Mr. Goodman and Mr. Fellows, in the old council, wanted to bind over the Legislature when discussing the New Constitution Bill, before they accorded it plenary powers of dealing with squatters' leases. Three millions sterling they would have, *per fas aut nefas*, if not from the local legislature, under award from the imperial privy council, Mr. Goodman detailing the nature and extent of squatter grievance in terms of vulgar under-bred flippancy, Mr. Fellows, under a strange visitation of obliquity, pledging himself to the entire legality of their demands.

At the time to which I refer the squatters had not shown the cloven foot—they were most congenially occupied in reaping the unexpected harvest, and the bulk of the people were too busy, as well as too prosperous, to bother their brains about remote political consummations, while even the land gluttons knew there was enough and to spare of unoccupied crown property to gorge them to repletion. Thus it was, as I before said, that the squatters were not mixed up in the controversy, while the Government and the Legislature were by turns implored and bullied to "unlock the lands," or, in other words, to exceed their powers, by decreeing without authority, at the very time when the colony, dissatisfied and disgusted with irresponsible government, inadequate representation, and a circumscribed franchise, were preparing a new constitution for royal and imperial ratification—a constitution the great battle-ground of which was

the unlimited right of dealing with land. Yet the people and the press were insane enough to agitate for a partial anticipation of the grand charter on which they were contented to rest their future rights and liberties. Thus, while spurning the imbecilities of irresponsible rule, they demanded an arbitrary and unconstitutional exercise of its power.

This long digression I felt to be unavoidable, for the most cursory, desultory notice of Victoria wanting a reference to the land question in all the stages of its progress, would, to use the threadbare simile, be like the play of Hamlet without the Prince in any of the acts. Let us now proceed to the auction-room, where T——t himself was in the pulpit, dilating on the size, the beauty, and the value of a large corrugated iron store—eighty feet by thirty—imported by the representatives of Moses and Son as a place of business, but which was now offered for sale, as that firm had secured fixed premises for their immense business. From the extraordinary accumulation and unceasing arrivals of merchandise, and the utter comparative dearth of stores, this iron house was sought after with great avidity, the competition being both keen and spirited; but it was at length knocked down to a friend of mine, Mr. H——y L—h—n, for 1800*l.* odd, the cost price being, I suppose, somewhere about 300*l.* Mr. L—h—n could have secured a profit of thirty per cent. on the amount within an hour of his purchase, and he had not fully completed its erection when he was offered for it a yearly rent of 1800*l.*, for a term of seven years, by Messrs. B——t Brothers.

The next morsel in the programme was the celebrated St. Kilda paddock, the property of Mr. D——y, of the firm of D——y C—k—s, containing about ten acres, and purchased a few months before for 4000*l.*—a price then considered excessive. But from the number of land and building specu-

lators coveting it, so vast a change was wrought in its estimated value, that Mr. D——y had numerous offers of 8000*l.*, and one or two of 10,000*l.*, before the proceedings commenced. But as he could afford to nurse a good thing quite as well as any other person in the colony, he declined all these temptations, fixing his minimum at 12,000*l.*, and actually, while he was beset at the door by a host of private bidders, Mr. T——t knocked it down to the nod of 22,000*l.* These two instances will help my friends and readers in this upper world to form some idea of the value their cousins in the southern hemisphere set upon their country lands and town houses in 1853; and, as a further aid, I will superadd a few other instances from the Government land sales of that morning. At North Melbourne, then a naked hill, crowned with the Benevolent Asylum, nearly two miles from the Post-office, anything rather than a desirably-situated or circumstanced district, allotments sold as quick as they were offered, at the rate of 1500*l.* and 1800*l.* per acre. On the eastern hill, on its remote hips, at double the amount; and a quarter-acre allotment in Bay-street, Sandridge, was purchased by the proprietor of the "Sandridge Inn" at the unheard-of price of 4200*l.*, or 16,800*l.* an acre. Country sections, as I heard, also fetched extraordinary prices, though the purchasers had no other knowledge of their situation or quality save that indicated by large, unauthenticated maps, which, in the dearth of draughtsmen in the colony, underwent trifling periodical alterations and additions, something like the annual winner of the Derby formerly in sporting journals, who got a star on the forehead, a grey fetlock, a switch tail, or a white hind-leg, as occasion required.

I went off early from the auction to witness the proceedings at an election for the city, contested on that occasion

by Mr. John Thomas Smith, the mayor, and Mr. Lachlan Mackinnon, one of the principal proprietors of the *Argus*. With two such competing candidates I calculated on a spirited contest in its most comprehensive sense, and having received an early education in contested elections in my native country, where I imbibed a relish and reverence for those rollicking manifestations invented to sustain the glory of our constitution in Church and State, by means of a profuse and unlicensed distribution of gold, whisky, and blood, I went with all the feelings of a hungry man to a tavern to compare notes between the sayings and doings on and around the Melbourne hustings and those of my own dear old borough of Sligo.

Never was a hungry man more disappointed than I was on reaching St. Patrick's Hall, for, instead of a pair of excited mobs bantering each other at times with good jokes, and battering each other the next moment with stout shillelaghs—instead of bands, banners, and the living thunder of human voices—I found a miserly array of empty benches, a straggling muster of lukewarm adherents making ludicrous efforts to parody enthusiasm, and still-born attempts at delivering themselves of jokes. It was more like a temperance tea-fight than a hustings exhibition, and I could not repress a sigh as I thought of the old Crown Court in the Hall of Justice at Sligo, and called to mind the stirring scenes in which I myself was on all occasions a stirring actor. I expressed my astonishment to an intelligent person beside me, but he told me that the days of political or party enthusiasm in Melbourne passed away with the discovery of gold. "In former times," he said, "the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen congregated in numbers on their several festivals, and originated exciting scenes of riot and injury. People, too, could be got together to organise parties for hunting

down bushrangers, or to agitate for separation; but now-a-days there is nothing can bring a crowd together except to form a gold mining company, or to attend the exhibition of a big nugget." And most certainly the scene before me was a demonstrative proof of what he told me. The united adherents of the rival candidates scarcely numbered a hundred, and fifty uninterested spectators in addition would make up the number of the entire gathering. Although there was the cry of "Unlock the lands" and "Constitutional government," the speaking was tame, dull, and monotonous, far below the level of Old World mediocrity, which may in some measure be accounted for by the identity of sentiment on these subjects by both candidates, who were obliged to travel over the same track on the old beaten ground. When the show of hands was called for, they arose languidly, as if they were pulled up by rusty wires; and when the poll came to be demanded, it was asked in a tone of timid request, as if the applicant were ashamed of his interference. I remember that Mr. John Thomas Smith had the show of hands, and that he was finally declared elected by a considerable majority; and I had subsequently an opportunity of judging that Mr. Smith made an excellent member as well as an incomparable mayor, although, like all successful men, he came in for his meed of obloquy.

The election proceedings were so brief, I was enabled to catch the evening steam-boat for Geelong. I was not encumbered with luggage, having only a pair of socks, a revolver, and a shillelagh; even my watch I left in charge of a friend who could not claim any affinity; and my funds I limited to my mere travelling charges, as there was a party of friends—young men accustomed to a smoother life—at work in Ballarat who I knew would supply all my wants in case of necessity. The "packet" was packed by a motley crowd

fore and aft, and filled to the hatches with merchandise, for at that period all the Ballarat supplies went by way of Geelong, the upper portion of the Bacchus Marsh route being wholly impracticable for teams. I observed that there were two gay wedding parties on board bound for Geelong, which was then the favourite resort for young couples to spend the honeymoon in. Before we got well clear of the shipping in Hobson's Bay, both these parties seemed to have amalgamated, and by a mutual compact to regard all the remainder of the passengers as their guests, as if come by invitation on a pleasure-trip in a yacht hired and found with all the good things of the colony to celebrate the joint festival. They were unceasing in their attentions, and irresistible in their importunities to "drink," leaving it very much like the Yankee alternative, "either to liquor or fight," and no more ready source of quarrel could have been selected than for an independent party to call a round of drink and insist on paying for it. The happy bridegrooms ordered the "best tea" the boat could afford, and in their anxiety to furnish the board in style, they pressed into the service a pair of Cochin fowls, the dear purchase of an uxorious farmer from the Barabool Hills, remarking, as if it were an accidental discovery, that "the poor birds were carried off by an attack of sore-throat." When the meal was served, the captain, to humour the whim and "keep the peace," abdicated his 'tween deck functions to the bridegrooms, who installed themselves at the top and bottom of the table, and at a very early stage of the entertainment voted the aromatic infusion a vile drug, ordering it to be removed and replaced by the more popular fluids—champagne, and brandy, &c. Fortunately, however, for the pockets of the hosts and the health of their constrained guests, there were only a few bottles of poisonous stuff, miscalled champagne, on board;

but the quantity of ale, porter, brandy, and Old Tom consumed in cups and saucers was, in the language of a table neighbour, "a caution." We had abundance of loose songs and coarse jokes, good healths and strong speeches, and I am inclined to think the festive scene would have been further diversified by unpleasant proceedings, only that we made a quick trip, which ended before the company was wound up to "conflict pitch." I had the curiosity to ascertain from the steward that the entertainment cost 63*l.* odd, exclusive of the fowls, for which the farmer demanded 12*l.*, notwithstanding, as was observed by one of his customers, "that the bloody b—— chawed up one, to his own cheek, and swallowed five pounds' worth of tucker* besides." The length of the bill, however, had not the effect of damping the fire of hospitality, for the whole party, with the exception of the farmer, were invited and earnestly pressed to adjourn to Mack's Hotel for a wind up; and I believe a few congenial spirits accompanied them, but I took the direction to the Royal Mail Hotel, to which I was recommended, and where I found a clean and cheerful coffee-room, with a blazing fire, and a small, respectable party.

As it was dark when I arrived, and heavy rain had commenced falling, I postponed my tour of the city until morning, but my resolution of remaining at home for the remainder of the evening was overcome at the instance of my new acquaintances, who were all bound for the theatre, to attend the benefit of a deserving young actress, an inmate of the hotel at the time. I pleaded costume, but was overruled, although the remainder were dressed with a rigid exactness, as if they had gone through a mangle and were unused to the process. There was only one deviation in this laudable

* Tucker is the designation given to food in general—*i. e.* eating and drinking in Victorian low life.

parody on evening attire from that in vogue in this upper world, and that was in the nether garments; the gentlemen having their pantaloons crammed into Napoleons, while the ladies buried their tiny feet and tapering ankles in lumbering Wellingtons. On the approach of the hour, the coffee-room door was thrown open, and a big man with a sou'-wester and jack-boots, that seemed to reach to his arm-pits, announced that he was ready to take them to the "thayathur." Imagining that he was a Jehu, I tendered my services to a young lady to assist her into the carriage, but her ringing laugh was followed by the explanation that the big man with the sou'-wester was employed to carry the ladies *seriatim* on his back to the scene of our evening's amusement. Most of the gentlemen of the party were acquainted with their bearings; but in my dark ignorance, before I had proceeded two hundred yards, I plopped straight down into an abominable chasm, which I thought at first would engulph me to the chin. It is unnecessary to say that I got a benefit which sufficed for the night, and I returned to the hotel, to get myself regularly scraped and rubbed down in the stable, and after making a compact for drying and brushing my clothes overnight, I retired to my dormitory.

The few houses built before the diggings generally contained some large, spacious apartments, as building materials and labour were then moderate, but in the crush which followed they were all divided and subdivided, particularly in hotels, for rooms "not big enough to whip a cat in" were just as costly as those of more ambitious pretensions, the partitions being invariably of the most flimsy description, as well from motives of present economy, as because the general belief was that the diggings would only be temporary. My bedroom, I soon discovered, was a moiety of a larger apartment, with a bed laid alongside an undulating partition, and

a basin and ewer enveloped in an Oxford-grey rubber on the window-seat. I crept quickly into the blankets, in order to abandon my clothes to the scullion in waiting for them, but before I got soundly asleep I became conscious of the entry of two people into the adjoining room. At first I did not mind the noise and conversation, but I soon became aroused to a thorough perception of the nature of the fun by a game of romps, which, after a series of bursts, was partially smothered for an instant, as the parties seemed to tumble in friendly embrace on a bed lying parallel with, and close by, mine. Next moment, however, it began to develop itself in another phase, when, deeming it no more than neighbourly to notify my contiguity, I gave a couple of sharp dry hems, and, in default of attention, rapped with my knuckles on a standard post which supported the dividing screen. "Oh, don't be alarmed, captin," exclaimed a male voice, coolly, from the other side; "don't fret your narves in the least, me an Nan is man an wife—riglar licensed mates.—Ain't we, pet?" to his companion. "Come, give us a smack, duck, an tell the gemman yourself it's all right, less he loses his night's rest; an I'll go an grope for the brandy-bottle." I interfered no further in the night's amusements, but I had very vivid dreams that the brandy-bottle was discovered, and that their slumbers were very frequently broken.

CHAPTER XI.

A Morning Peep at my sleeping Neighbours—Geelong—Its Aspect in 1853, and its future Pretensions—Mistake of its Patrons in not having their first Railway to Ballarat—Bullock and Horse-teams to the Diggings—Their respective Rates and Advantages—My Start for Ballarat—Adventure at Batespond—Escape from a Bushranger—The Basin of the Barwon—O'Meara's Public—The Occurrences of the Evening—Diabolical Attempt of a Brace of Footpads—Their bloodless Defeat—Make some new Acquaintances—Our next Day's Journey—An Australian Shepherd—Russell's Station—Human Nature *versus* unanimated Nature—Out Police Station—Experiment in the Admixture of Virgin Water with Brandy—Assisted by Her Majesty's Mail-man, who carries our Luggage over the Bogs—Watson's Public—The Company there, and their Proceedings—Overtake a Party of Sailors bound for the Diggings—Spend the Night together at Buninyong.

As the morning bell rattled on the lobbies, my door was unceremoniously opened, and my clothes, marvellously resuscitated, were laid in a bundled state on the foot of my bed. I made my toilet quickly, and finished a hurried breakfast before the general company had congregated, wishing to take a survey of the town before my start. This I fixed for two o'clock, having ascertained that I could not comfortably reach Watson's public—over forty miles distant—in a day's walk, as the ground was in parts very hilly, and in others wet and sloppy; I therefore arranged to make my first halt at a public called the "Ten Mile House," though in reality it was over twelve from Geelong. On going through the hall my attention was attracted by a boisterous racket on the

stairs, caused by a pretty young girl and a gay, whiskered Lothario, who by turns were chasing each other up and down in screaming laughter. At the first glance I somehow put them down as my restless neighbours, and the moment the girl caught sight of me, by a similar species of intuition, I suppose, she recognised me also, for she dropped the cap which she had just pulled from her partner's head, and darted round the landing like a bird on the wing. I should much rather she waited, for I entertained no disagreeable remembrances on the score of my fitful slumbers, and would have been delighted to contemplate a young person endowed with so much animal spirits. The man was astonished at the sudden flight, first looking up in the direction of the retreat, and then turning round to confront me in surly silence, intended to convey, "Who the devil are you, come to stop our larking?"

I walked out, or rather jumped about like a man leaping from tuft to tuft on a shaking bog, for my English readers must know there was no other style of progressing through the streaming mud-thoroughfares of the great city of Geelong, then firmly believed to be the embryo capital of the colony, and certainly, notwithstanding the depth of its muck or the yawning aspect of its cavernous mire cisterns, or the overhanging banks of the frightful gullies, designed for conveying its sewage, there was much to admire in the delightful position of the town. Seated on the high and healthy elevation along the south-west side of Corio Bay, backed and flanked by a most fertile country, and fronted by a quickly shelving beach that admitted the close approach of good sized vessels, Geelong was only wanting in a river like the Yarra to support its antagonistic pretensions to Melbourne as a mere city site, and even wanting the river, having such a gold-field as Ballarat within seventy miles, and an illimit-

able extent of auriferous country still further to the west, Geelong might have proved a formidable rival, if instead of exhausting their energies and resources on an unnecessary railway to Melbourne, its citizens had directed their attention and enterprise to deepening the channel leading to the harbour, and constructing a railway to the great western gold-field; or rather I would reverse the order, in first constructing a railway to Ballarat, and leaving the deepening of the channel to a later period, for during some years subsequent to which I write, merchandise could have been carried from Hobson's Bay to Geelong at as small a freight as to Melbourne; and even at the present day the expense of discharging from Port Henry to Geelong is very little in excess of that from Hobson's Bay to the metropolis, with its deep water-piers and railways to the contrary notwithstanding. Yes, the Geelongese have made an irretrievable mistake; in vulgar parlance, "they have put their foot in it." Even though they may ultimately get, which I very much question, their separate trunk line of government railway, they never can, by any possible exertions, create such another opportunity as the one they so blindly neglected. Had they a line of railway now to Ballarat instead of to Melbourne, they would be the natural monopolists of the vast and increasing trade called into life by the wondrous discoveries of Arrarat and Pleasant Valley, instead of being cut out by little outlying coast villages like Belfast, Portland, and Warnanbool; and I am impressed with the conviction, too, that was the Geelong line opened for traffic to Ballarat on the day in which it was opened for amusement to Williamstown, that an extension thence to Castlemaine, Bendigo, and the Murray would have anticipated the wonderful direct trunk line which has cost so much talk, and will swallow such countless thousands.

In 1853, all the Ballarat supplies went forward through Geelong; the mail, also, was forwarded by that route, and the escorts came down by it. In fact, it was the only line for traffic, for the Bacchus Marsh approach was not ventured on even by horsemen, except in the summer season. There was a great deal of business bustle about the pier as I took my morning's stroll, numbers of large decked lighters and moderate-sized vessels discharging freight from Melbourne and Hobson's Bay. There was also an active stir of business pervading the town; long strings of bullock teams, some eight yoke strong, leaving with mountains of miscellaneous merchandise, guided by hirsute mermen, only visible from the waist upwards, but audible for miles from the vociferous pitch of their blasphemous objurgations. There were also long streams of bullock teams coming in empty, but at no quicker rate, shedding scales of dry mud to make room for fresh damp ones; the mermen in a like external condition, but unlike their brethren outward bound, they plied the whip alone, with its loud, detonating crack and flesh-tearing cut, evidently husbanding their lingual resources and maledictions for the return journey. There were also long strings of bullock trains standing quietly in long ranks by the street sides, in front of merchants' stores and warehouses, as the bags and boxes, barrels and cases were being piled upon the waggons without the slightest regard to the poor animals, whose lank empty flanks and peaked hip-bones pleaded eloquently for consideration, some standing and gazing laterally with a sort of stupid intelligence at the proceedings, and others from exhaustion lying in the mire, chewing the cud with a resignation seemingly as patient as if they were reposing on clean dry oaten straw, munching mouthfuls of sweet new-mown hay. The price of carriage per ton of 2000 lb. to

Ballarat was 60*l.*, having fallen from 75*l.*, the rates of the previous year; and the average time occupied in the journey, taking winter and summer together, was about fifteen days, the distance being only seventy miles. But then portions of the road were so impracticable that the entire loads had often to be taken and carried piecemeal to distances where the ground might be found sufficiently firm for pulling. There were only few horse teams in 1853, as horses were found unable to bear the hardships of the road, and offered too strong temptations to the thieves who then infested the country, driving a roaring, though a very dangerous and precarious trade. However, when horse teams were sought after they commanded at least one-third higher rates, for they only took light loads, and travelled with comparative expedition. The conveyances, too, were more secure and water-tight, and the carters more reliable and careful.

I made some inquiries relative to the price of town allotments, and found that they followed close upon the heels of those in Melbourne, with an increasing demand, for the Geelongese have evermore been loud and eloquent in extolling the charms of their city and its environs, and in predicting the sunburst which, on a future day, is certain to irradiate and bathe her in a sea of glory. They claim the possession of every blessing which can render a community contented and prosperous, and deny the existence of any evil which can make life irksome or unprofitable. If you express yourself in terms of pity because the Barnon did not intersect the city, a host of citizens would hasten to assure you it is not a circumstance to be at all lamented, "for there is much better water to be had at every back door at very trifling sinking." If you hint a mild complaint about the midnight tormentors, you are snappishly informed that there

are no such nasty insects indigenous to the Pivot City*—that you must have carried the fleas or mosquitoes in your travelling-rug, and transported the bugs from the beautiful capital—always mentioned in underlined accentuation denoting irony. And whatever the citizens assert the local press swear to, so that by the dint of energetic and exaggerated eulogies, Geelong has come to "assume a value though it has it not," and the Geelongese, from the effects of incessant repetition, are so familiarised with the deception, that they have become at length sincere believers in the mental mirage of their own creation, continuing incurable monomaniacs, buried in delusion so deeply beyond the alleviating reach of a lucid interval, that I religiously conceive nothing short of an earthquake, engulphing the Barrabool Hills, Mount Moriac, and Corio Bay, will render them rational members of society.

At two o'clock precisely, after a light lunch, I took my stick, and set out on my tour to the gold-fields, intending to proceed from Ballarat by the Eureka and the Jim Crow ranges to Mount Alexander and Forest Creek, and thence to Bendigo, returning home by M'Ivor. I resolved, if possible, to travel, while on the road, alone, and as a preparation for an inspection by the knights of the road, I put a little silver in one waistcoat pocket, balancing it with a penknife and a half-sovereign in the other, by way of showing that I was an unsophisticated wayfarer, but stowing away, I hope, with a pardonable degree of hypocrisy, the few bank-notes I carried in a ragged old newspaper in my coat tail-pocket, where I correctly surmised they would be most likely to elude discovery. Like the nascent environs of Melbourne,

* The Pivot City is a sobriquet invented by the citizens of Geelong to symbolise it as the point on which the fortunes of the colony would culminate and revolve. They also invented several other original terms—a phraseology christened by the Melbourne press as the Geelongese dialect.

those of Geelong were surveyed, lined out, and corner-pegged to a boundless extent, every allotment almost containing a notice that it was intended for public accommodation; but the terms, I was given to understand, were not framed on the most inviting basis. Ashby, the northern outskirt of Geelong, is most agreeably situated on elevated ground stretching along the western shore of Corio Bay, and must come in for a wing of the sunburst whenever that phenomenon is disclosed to the world.

I crossed a bleak waste, after leaving Ashby, pock-pitted with shallow water-holes, and then ascended a high sloping range of arable land, fenced in and partially cultivated, over which the main road to the interior was laid out. The soil was stiff and heavy in its natural state, but I remarked in the enclosures under the plough that it became more mouldy and friable, giving promise of great future fertility. Proceeding along the crown of this ridge for some distance, I arrived at a point where I got a most commanding and expansive view, including Corio Bay, the highly cultivated country to the east and south of Geelong, the Pivot City in its skeleton frame, the fertile ranges called the Barrabool Hills, and more immediately under me the picturesque and garden-like basin of the Barwon, with its rich unctuous soil clothed in grassy verdure, or mantling in luxuriant herbage, with here and there a thick clover paddock stocked with high-bred cattle and a comfortable timber-sheltered homestead, smiling embosomed between its snug, haggard, and neat outhouses. I could scarcely believe I was looking down on a new settlement in a country of yesterday, it bore so much the garden aspect of an olden colony of agriculturists, where all the improvements in the primitive science of tillage had been handed down from generation to generation, until they blended in ultimate perfection. What a contrast did it not

present, in its peaceful, plentiful, and happy seclusion, to the wrangling, jostling, battle of life going on within a few short miles of its borders!

There was very little timber on these hills, and in the ravines where the surface drainage cut channels through the natural sod a depth of fine dark loam was disclosed capable of producing any crop of grass or grain. The slopes trending down to the banks of the Barwon were of the most pleasing configuration, clothed in a delightful garniture of emerald sheen; and I experienced an ecstasy of admiration as I came to a bold brow, where I saw clustering below me the unpretending hamlet of Batesford, reposing in a rich alluvial meadow sparsely bordered with nice trim cottages and neat gardens. As I sauntered along, giving way to a natural love for rural beauty, I managed so far to keep clear of tracks and paths by which the waggons and wayfarers were passing and travelling, but at this point I had no alternative but go on to the beaten road leading into the village, very thankful it was so close at hand, as a heavy shower was just impending. It began falling as I entered the village, where I soon reached an old-fashioned house with a deep verandah, partly embowered with creepers, which afforded entertainment as well as shelter.

Batesford was not much of a stopping place. Being so near Geelong—four miles and a half—it was too short for a stage; and only six miles and a half from O'Meara's public—a regular diggers' house of call—it did not attract great crowds of swipers. The shower, however, soon collected a goodly few under the verandah and within the tap, and wherever a few were gathered together in those days strong drinks soon circulated. I scarcely had sidled into a position, when a rough fellow on a canvassing tour addressed me, saying, "What's yours?" I was first at a loss, but he soon

relieved me. "Come, brandy or beer, mate, it's my shout?" "Thank you," I replied, "I'm not inclined for a drink just now." "You be b——d," was his quick rejoinder. So I mentioned "Brandy!" in haste, from pacific promptings, which dispelled his frown. While this shout was going down, we had an amusing scene growing out of a bit of trading between a big local butcher and a Scotch shoemaker on his way upwards with a sack of his own manufacture. The butcher took a fancy to a huge pair of ankle-boots, which Sandy said "would na fit him," with a dry smile, which the other took as an imputation on his foot, "a regular whopper, an' no flies," as a bystander sententiously remarked, to the further indignation of the butcher, who wagered a "shout round" he would pull them on, and pay for them too. "Weel," said Sandy, "an' you pay for them, ye'r weelcome to pull theer guts oot." On these terms the bet was soon tied, and the butcher, after throwing his apron aside, kicking off his old Bluchers, called for a pint of ale, and then sat down with his back to the door-post to perform the operation, surrounded by the entire group, pretending to take the most anxious interest in the wager. His first essay convinced him that he was placed in rather a dubious position, for before making a decided effort he called for soap, and proceeded to take off the stocking, a task of no small difficulty, for it peeled off with a degree of reluctance, as if it considered itself incorporated with the system from a long tenure of undisturbed possession. But even soft-soap, so efficacious in certain emergencies, was of little avail—he pulled, and strained, and puffed, and muttered curses amidst jeers and encouragement, jokes and jibes, until, as Sandy exclaimed, "he pulled the twa lugs oot o' the blessed boots," and came thwack with his head against the door-jamb, pro-

voking a thunder-clap of laughter, under cover of which I retreated.

There was a wide, long bridge across the river, then swollen with a full volume of water, and immediately beyond it the hills again presented their steep, green slopes, disfigured and cut up by the deeply indented waggon tracks, which wound upwards in serpentine coils. When I reached the top, and took a backward look on the little village, seated, as it were, in the bottom of a punch-bowl, I was still alone, for I had left precipitately before the loser's shout was called for, and most of the company, I learned, were downwards bound. The afternoon was clear, and I started off again at a rapid rate in a line to keep me somewhat clear of the thoroughfare which began spreading out in innumerable tracks over the wide, flat, watery waste on which I had now entered. This inhospitable-looking plateau seemed of great extent, possessing, however, a much better soil than its surface appearances would indicate, and from its elevated position being easily susceptible of thorough drainage and reclamation. Anxious to get over this bleak and dreary waste, I stepped out at my best pace without diverging, to avoid the numerous water-pools, so that my water-tights were frequently submerged above their tops. I was desirous, too, as candour is expected, to reach O'Meara's before the gloaming, contented to defer my interview with the corps of gentlemen at large to a later opportunity. As dusk supervened I could descry the public hull down—as sailors say—about a mile and a half to the northward, and shortly afterwards, while straining my eye to see whether it was a star or a lamp that was glistening in front of it, I was startled by a smart plash in the water-hole over which I had only jumped the instant before, and, on turning round, I discovered a youngish man getting to his knees on the bank. I marvelled how, considering the

nature of the ground, he could have approximated me so stealthily; but I did not hesitate in divining his intention, nor could he entirely hide a certain air of confusion, discomposure, and disappointment, indicative of detection and lost prey. I recognised him as one of the party under the verandah, an athletic young fellow, unencumbered with "swag,"* as it is termed, beyond a polished walking-stick, most probably a sword-cane with a leaden end. I entertain no manner of doubt but that he dogged me cautiously from Batesford—a proceeding of no difficulty, as I rarely look behind—and taking advantage of the failing light and my lonely isolation, he made a tiger pounce, intending to fell me, but jumping short, was foiled as I found him. I stooped, nevertheless, to assist him, but he leaped to his legs without thanking me, and then, without either practising stealth or ostentation, I took my revolver from my breast-pocket and carried it in my hand at full cock. I failed in opening a conversation with my new companion, for he proved incorrigibly taciturn, though not altogether devoid of politeness, for in different spots he was courteous enough to offer me precedence—delicate attentions I felt constrained to decline for prudential reasons. At length, clearly seeing he was suspected, and that his time for business was short, as we were approaching the public, he made a short halt, and drew a stroke, not quicker, however, than I drew my pistol, for I anticipated an attack before parting. "You're not going to fire?" he exclaimed. "Most assuredly," I replied, "unless you move off directly." "Well," said he, "I'll please you, though the road's wide enough for two;" adding, as he widened the distance betwixt us, "We'll meet again afore long." I could see that he too had a pistol in his breast, but I suppose, in the first instance, he deemed its use unne-

* "Swag" means portable luggage that can be carried on the person.

cessary; and, in the second, either apprehended that the report might reach the house, or that the charge got wet in the splash.

I soon got close to my destination, which brought to mind the descriptions of floating Chinese residences I had read of, as it seemed to ride at anchor in an ocean of fluid mud that glistened lazily under the light of a murky lamp. I made two semi-circuits round the shore without being able to see a dry approach, and then waited the advance of some bullock drays, hoping to reach the threshold by hanging on behind. In this expectation I was also disappointed, for I found that they always camped out, and that when the driver or his companions wanted to drink, they left the teams standing on dry ground, and strode through the slush themselves. I had, therefore, no alternative but follow the example, walking in the wake of a single man, who, I could see, half doubted my honour. While stamping the mud off his boots at the door, he cried out, "Fill us a nobbler—dark; what's yours, mate?" to me. I thankfully declined, to his evident amusement, for his grin expressed "green," almost audibly, as he took a quick up-and-down survey of the *rara avis* who could refuse gratuitous drink in the colony. He then took up the thick-bottomed tumbler with cone-inverted interior, and slowly surging its shallow contents from side to side with a castor-oil look of disgust, he said, "Well, mate, you're bent on your own destruction to be a-squandering of your liquor this way. Damn it," dropping the irony, "can't you afford a nobbler that'll wet the tongue on both sides for a shilling?" But without waiting for a reply from the landlord, he threw down the nobbler with one hand and the coin with the other, and stalked off with an air of offended majesty.

Though the house was called O'Meara's, the present land-

lord was a thorough Highland Celt, with a shock-cropped head, rejoicing in the same complexion as his stalwart sister, who assisted him in his functions. The premises were in a wretched, tumble-down condition, yet, with all its imperfections, he gave 1800*l.* for a three years' good-will, subject to a rent of 400*l.* per annum; and was so far contented with his bargain, as he told me, "that he refused 3000*l.* to walk out," although the three-fourths of his business was a bar trade, for the "ups," who were generally hard up, camped out at a place called the "Muddy Water Holes," some miles further on, while the "downs" were in such a hurry to spend their money, they always arranged to reach Geelong the second night.

There was a wide hearth filled with great blazing logs outside the bar, having a long, rude form in front, with two short ones on either side; but the company was confined to five—a sickly man, with a decent-looking wife, on one side, downward bound, and three respectable-looking young people, one a mere youth, upward bound. The latter party only joined us at supper, which consisted of a boiled fore-quarter of mutton, entire, damper, and tea. The sick man was too ill to eat, and his good wife was too attentive to leave him; however, the Highland maiden took out some tea, bread, and butter. During the meal I found that the young lads were natives of Glasgow, and that two of them were brothers to a Scotch engineer, or millwright, who worked for two years in my employment in the erection of a large corn-mill. He was an excellent hand, and a trustworthy fellow, and the brothers seemed to enjoy a transport of delight in hearing a stranger in a distant country praise him in an earnest manner. They also looked to obtain some advice from me, for I could see they were anxious, unassured, and, from their own confession, very scantily supplied with

funds, having started without the concurrence of their friends. I myself was charmed at the joyous manner in which they accepted my invitation to travel in company, and felt as if I was, to some extent, bound to look after them for the remainder of the journey.

After supper, we adjourned to the fire, and I got a little water to rinse my muddy stockings in, and put them to dry. As it was early we sat chatting round the hearth, or listening to the extraordinary dialogues of the various droppers-in from time to time, until at length two fellows, downward bound, came in, ordering beds promptly for the night, which were refused quite as curtly by our host, so much to our surprise, that I turned round to see if I could detect any outward or visible objection. They were certainly two as forbidden-looking ruffians as could well be raked up from the refuse of convictism, and their garb, from hat to shoes, was in strict keeping with their natural appearance; in fact, their make-up was perfect, and their demeanour, no doubt, would have been suitable—"the action to the word"—only for a wholesome apprehension of our strapping host, whose potatory arrangements about the bar were liberally garnished with "guns, and pikes, and bows." "And why the b——y hell won't you house two tired down lads in your old crib?" said one. "Not clean enough for a tasty horse to lie down in," chimed in the other, in a pure Milesian accent. "I'll gie ye na excuses," said the landlord, "so leet your pipes and gang awa wi' ye, richt aff." "You'll give us a drain, anyhow?" returned both in a breath. "Weel, what's it to be?" inquired the host, turning round to a tumbler rack. "A quart o' brandy apiece," replied one, winking to his comrade, "an' here's the copper"—throwing down a fistful of sovereigns—"so take your rights." The host's face was a subject for quick study as he looked from the coin to the

men, and back again, without saying a word. I thought he would not serve them, but Sandy's heart had a keen affinity for gold, so, mechanically picking one from the lot, he rang it on the counter, and liking the music, he subjected two others to the same ordeal. He filled the liquor into two tin cans, and shoved them across the counter. "Here's to your hearty damnation," said one, putting the can to his lips. "Soon and suddint," was my countryman's postscript, who, after a good long swig, continued, "and as sand and soap isn't plenty wid you be appeerince, here's a wash for your dirty floor." Saying which, he discharged his can round the apartment just as sailors would in washing the deck—an example followed by his comrade, who surged the best portion of his into the hearth, which caused a broad burst of flame that made us all leap up from our seats, and Sandy across the counter. The ruffians, when we looked round, had each a brace of pistols in their hands, quite ready to repel an assault to the death. Sandy quickly vaulted back for weapons, and we all simultaneously presented arms, more, however, to produce apprehension than death. I do believe, however, that our Celtic host would have spilled blood, only that I seized and turned aside the barrel of his blunderbuss. The prompt exhibition of deadly weapons had its proper effect, else I am certain the scoundrels would have bailed us up;* but, as the odds were so dead against them, they moved off, "muttering curses loud and deep." Sandy ran backwards, as they retired, to observe their movements, and

* Bailing up is an ordinary process in the Australian colonies, and even one man has been known to enter a house single-handed, and after bailing up all the inmates, rifle the whole premises. It is thus managed: he enters with arms in his hands, swearing to shoot down the first person who makes a hostile movement, a threat always carried out. He then orders one to tie up his neighbour, and so on till all are fettered, when he binds the last, and perpetrates the robbery.

he, as well as his sister, kept watch all night, one in the house, the other in the stables, but there was no further attempt at mischief.

We had an early breakfast, and a bright, clear morning for our tramp; but my juvenile companions, I found, had completely overburdened themselves with swag, each having at least 120 lbs., comprising clothes and utensils. I expostulated with them on the score of superfluity, as did also the host, who kindly offered to store some things until their return; but as we saw the lads were loth to abandon anything, we ceased exhorting them. As there was not any place for refreshment nearer than Watson's, our terminus for the day, we each took goodly-sized triangles of damper, and I provided, on the sly, a bottle of brandy, price 15s. The plain beyond O'Meara's slopes upwards for some miles, and spreads away east and west to a great extent. It is a fine grassy land, forming part of a squatting station, and, being such, the waggons were not allowed to diverge at pleasure from the maiden tracks—an interdict which caused the proprietor to be frequently and warmly remembered in the prayers of the teamsters. We kept a little wide of the track, but not out of sight, as there was timber in the distance, and we had our fears about getting bushed. Before we got over the plain, we crossed close to a large flock of sheep, browsing after their ambulatory fashion, accompanied with the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle of their tiny bells, and attended by that peripatetic vegetable, an Australian shepherd, with his canine videttes. I remember the time when reading the bucolics of Virgil with a Key, how enamoured I was with the elysian charms of pastoral life; how I envied Tytirus—what verdant pictures of bowery bliss, Arcadian felicity, I sketched in my imagination; how I tortured the dactyles and spondees in my "fine frenzied" attempts at composing short eclogues; how, in

fact, I pined and sighed for the sylvan calling of a "gentle shepherd." But if I had not been long previously weaned from my misplaced affection, the contemplation of a Victorian shepherd moving along after his flock from morn till night in a state of semi-somnambulism, with a snub-nosed dhudeen of the blackest aspect, instead of a tuneful pipe, stuck in the string of his hat, would have shaken my fond passion on its maiden foundation, and a sight of the swain reposing at night in an horizontal sentry-box, the guardian of his lambs, would have effected a radical cure.

From the plain we passed some belts, and thick clumps of heavy timber on very rich land, and, after a few miles' travel, emerged upon a grand rolling country, intersected with streamlets, and well adapted either for pasture or the plough, where we found a favourite camping-ground, called the "Muddy Water Holes." It was a strange-looking place, like the hastily deserted camp of a retreating army, many of the fires, still alight, eating into the trunks of the old trees against which they were kindled; the ground covered with the débris of hurried repasts, and abandoned baggage of every description—abandoned not from its worthlessness, as was evident, but from being an encumbrance. We took a resting spell here after our eight miles' walk, and I found it a very favourable opportunity for renewing my exhortations about the superfluous swag, as my companions were suffering from its inconvenience, and they had under their eyes ample proof that hosts of others were constrained to do likewise. I surprised them with a nip of brandy each on giving their assent, and we then reviewed the packs, throwing away from each, as near as we could guess, 20 lb., and leaving 300 lb. residue. From this I insisted on taking for my own burden 75 lb., which equally apportioned the entire into four packs of 75 lb. I did not like leaving the lads after inviting them

to join me, and I could not bear the idea of lagging beside them with my broad shoulders unladen, while they would be painfully toiling under their disproportioned loads. They glowed with unexpressed gratitude at my consideration, and we made a fresh start in great spirits, soon reaching a beautiful undulating country, occupied, as I learned, by a squatter of the name of R——ll, whose home station was as lovely a district as I ever laid eyes upon—green as rich, natural clover could make it, with a quick, limpid rivulet flowing through it in a sloping dell, and timbered knolls scattered as if they were the offspring of artificial taste. Flocks, too, were to be seen at intervals, but the demon yells of the savage bullock-puncher*—"by distance mellowed o'er the meadows swept"—proved that Nature had not it all to herself.

From the confines of this station our road lay through a nasty rugged forest of comparatively young timber, until we came within a short distance of Watson's, where we passed a range of bark buildings in ruin, which was a horse-police outpost. We rested here, as there were pretty glimpses of open country from the hill on which we sat, and because a clear, trickling stream by our side looked as if its complexion would be mightily improved by the least taste of brandy. As we were making the experiment her Majesty's mail arrived on a pack-horse, followed by the mailman on another, and having, I suppose, a curiosity about chemical combinations, he dismounted to witness the result, which he ultimately assisted in testing; and not being within range of Rowland Hill, nor in a hurry to disseminate bad news, he very considerately proposed to carry on our swags to Watson's, about a mile and a half farther on, to which we graciously assented.

* Bullock-puncher, another sobriquet for the teamster, whose whip-shaft is always armed with a spike to punch an over-obdurate animal.

Watson's is, or was, excellently situated close by a nice creek, but the house was a most wretched, tumble-down domicile, with a shattered roof, which let the rain down the mouldy walls, and a tottering verandah, tiled with stringy bark. He was then preparing a new weatherboard addition, and well he might, for custom poured in upon him in a perfect torrent, being in a position which could not be passed either on the way up or down. There were not many when we arrived, as it was rather early, so we got a quiet supper, such as it was, and made the acquaintance of the host and his wife, young people from Dublin. Before sunset, however, considerable numbers arrived both ways, filling up every nook and corner save Mr. Watson's little private room, off which there were two small sleeping apartments, one for the family and the other for special visitors, with a bed on each side, and a space of about eighteen inches between them. My party, by a special ordinance, got the right of entrée to the sitting-room and the little bedroom as well. We were extremely amused, though in no wise edified by the dialogues and discussions going on in the bar, at the songs and sentiments given in the convivial groups in the barrack-room, and the open-air jollifications of a rollicking party, who kindled a fire in front, and kept brewing punch and relating their digger experiences to an outer circle of wondering lime-juicers, whose credulity was often purposely tested by some wonderful crammers. One man gravely related his state of perplexity on "coming down on a chunk of gold which was too big for the hole, and so heavy that he was obliged to hire a steam-engine to lift it." Another assured his auditors that "his claim in Canadian Gully was so rich that, on combing his hair after coming out of the drive, it was always good for two ounces;" and a horny-handed fellow devoted himself to perdition "if he wouldn't pay his expenses in town by washing out his finger-nails when he got there."

We—that is, my party—were quietly enjoying a glass of toddy in the private room with our host before turning in, when an inebriated fellow opened the door, and walked in unceremoniously to the table. Watson ordered him out peremptorily, but he muttered "his d——tion" if he would, staggering into a chair, as I thought, with simulated drunkenness, upon which Watson jumped up, saying, "I've remarked you all evening, and though I can put up with a great deal from a man who gets drunk on my premises, I'll be d——d if I'll stand cheek from a fellow who carries his liquor about him, so out you go." And out he did go, neck and crop. But while I was in the act of complimenting mine host on his sound philosophy, a gang of brawling ruffians burst in, swearing they had as good a right to the parlour as any "big bug," and "might they be blowed if they'd leave it." Seeing that the set was made at us, and that the intruders were set on by the fellow recently turned out, we stood up to retire, but Watson would not permit it. I apprehended a serious row, and thought the best way of averting it was to order "nobblers round," which, like oil on the troubled waters, stilled the ferment in so far as the row was concerned, but led to ebullitions of nobblers, which only subsided when the last survivor subsided on the floor. I was out early next morning, but even then there was a clamorous throng round the door of the bar, and in less than one hour I saw a wash-hand basin three-parts filled with money, the greater part silver, but a large proportion of gold, with a good many note-tails peeping through the heap. A nice early morning's receipt, which the landlord admitted to be over 100*l.*, and which I knew to be two-parts profit; for as you got into the interior the tariff gradually increased, the nobbler having in the course of the previous day's journey risen from 1s. to 1s. 6d.; the brandy, per bottle, from 15s. to 1*l.*; and everything else in proportion.

The greater part of the day's journey before us was through a low, marshy country, nearly all timbered, and so submerged for distances together, that all appearance of track was effaced, and we were frequently obliged to listen for the loud crack of the teamster's whip to judge of the right direction. This day's march was without incident, saving the overtaking of a party, who proved to be sailors, with their captain in command. They rigged a sort of palanquin, carried in turns by four men, which contained all their swag, and they moved gaily along. The captain told me the enterprise was one of his own design. To prevent his crew from breaking up, he took half, selected by lot, to the diggings, fitting them out at ship's expense, to try their luck for a month clear, on the understanding that they were to divide equally with those on board, who, in turn, were to have a try, on similar terms, under command of the first officer. We put up at Sellick's Hotel, at Bunningyong, and put in a jolly night of it in a small room to ourselves, within hearing of the digger melodies in the great public room, but subject to a further increase of rates, the nobbler having now advanced to 2s. Bunningyong, intended as the township of the Ballarat diggings, then boasted only a few scattered houses, but the site was selected in consequence of the abundance of water in the neighbourhood. Our sleeping apartment was an unlined slab room, through which the wind howled, and we were obliged to sleep two on each narrow stretcher, and pay 3s. each *in advance*.

CHAPTER XII.

The Brutality of Bullock-drivers all over the World—Clever Trick of a Grog-seller—Contrast in Appearance betwixt California and Victoria—Contrast in the Aspect of the Diggers as well—Post-office at Ballarat—Placard Advertisements—Find my digging Friends—The Hole of the Great Nugget—Speculations on Gold Deposits—My first Descent—Comfortless Aspect of Diggers' Tents—Diggers and Commissioners—Put my Scotch Friends in Harness—Sailors' Luck exemplified—The Digger Hunt and its Incidents—Capital Ruse in an Emergency—Government naturally held responsible for the Maladministration of its Officials.

Our sailor acquaintances and my party next morning resolved ourselves into a joint-stock company, and took the road to the gold-field, under the guidance of two return diggers. The road lay through bold ranges, and was exceedingly beautiful in places, but marked most disagreeably, at close intervals throughout, with dead and dying bullocks, in a pitiful state of emaciation, whose lacerated hides showed that even to the last stage they were mercilessly flayed by the relentless beasts in human form employed to drive them. It is a strange thing, but strictly true as far as my experience teaches me, that while, in almost all other associations betwixt man and the brute creation, a degree of sympathy, if not affection, arises from constant companionship, even though it may be alternated with quarrelsome interludes, no symptom of regard ever pulsates, no chord of kindness ever seems to awaken, in the callous heart of the remorseless bullock-driver for his patient team. The reciprocal attachment be-

tween man and the horse or dog is proverbial. The drunken tinker may thrash his donkey unreasonably at times, but there are moments when he will pull his long ears with friendly warmth. The keeper of wild beasts may use his pole or his scourge sternly on occasion, but a juncture of reconciliation soon follows, when he will pat the leopard softly on the head, and thrust him a tit-bit of atonement through the bars of his cage. But the bullock-puncher is a type of humanity apart from his fellows; he is neither to be propitiated by the willingness of his team, nor appeased by their most prodigious exertions. Cuts and curses are their reward, cuts and curses their punishment. After the most toilsome day's journey, he will ruthlessly turn them, scalded and bleeding, from the yoke, without caring to provide them either food or water, next morning goading them as cruelly as if they came to their task lusty from replenishment; and, finally, when a meekly-enduring brute, yielding to exhausted nature, sinks, without a moan, upon the road from pure inanition, the man-devil will drive the spike of the whip-handle into his still living eye, and unyoke the poor dying beast with a horrible malediction. I marked the class in America, in California, in Mexico, in Central America, at the Cape, and in Australia, and they all seem to be of the self-same family—fiends incarnate—without a drop of the milk of human kindness in their veins, inaccessible at all times to the promptings of charity or mercy.

About half way from Bunningyong, one of our volunteer guides took us a little aside the track to show us the scene of a clever trick, put in practice by a pair of brothers who commenced their career in Ballarat by sly grog-selling on a small scale, but the profits of the trade were so enormous, they gradually extended it, until they were enabled to buy a horse team of their own and take their supplies direct from

head-quarters. On their last journey in the district they got safely thus far with a full freight, which, at the current rates, would have completed "their pile," but they got stuck in a piece of swampy ground in the dusk and were unable to proceed, while in the morning they found their misfortune aggravated by the abduction of their horses. But necessity —that prolific mother—quickly presented them with a bantling, under the instigation of which they set to work sinking a hole, as if they had discovered a fresh lead. They were mysteriously silent as to their reasons for making the experiment, and altogether deported themselves in that studiously cautious manner calculated to excite remark and suspicion. The result was, that the whisper of a new find soon swelled into the trumpet-tongued rumour of a great discovery, which was followed by a great rush,* but long before a single hole was bottomed the brothers sold the last drop of their grog, and departed without their cart before the cheat was discovered—or punished, as it assuredly would have been, could the dupes have laid hands on them.

The first glance at the great and glorious gold-field of Ballarat we got was the celebrated Canadian Gully, then radiant with the still fresh fame of the enormous 137 lb. nugget. I was first struck, before approaching it closely, with the general aspect of the surrounding district, which, by a retrospective effort, I hastily compared on my mind's tablets with the contour of all the Californian diggings, without being able to discover any analogy in outline, any palpable geological resemblance in general configuration, any special lineament or feature, which could warrant Mr. Hargraves in jumping to the conclusion that gold should necessarily exist in Australia because its geological construction and

* Rush is a technical term applied to those great migratory waves of digging population which follow the report of fresh discoveries.

indications so closely resembled those of California. I have never been on the Sydney side, and am therefore unable to speak as to the style and configuration of the auriferous country within which the Turon diggings were discovered, but I have been on all the olden fields in Victoria—over their flats, through their gullies, and amongst their reefs. I have fossicked* on their surface, examined their shafts,† crawled through their drives,‡ and worked in their quartz tunnels, seeing little in common betwixt the two countries but the gold, and even that is dissimilar. The gold-fields of California exist in their integrity, amidst, or contiguous to, the hips and flanks of the great mountain ranges in distorted regions, peaked, jagged, and irregular, from the throes of volcanic convulsion. The gold there, in my time, never selected the smooth level meadows, or hanging slopes, as resting-places. It was most generally to be found diffused with the soil in the beds or shallow banks of the brawling streamlets, which, leaping from the icy crags of the great Sierra Nevada, hurried, in their almost hidden channels, through deep-seated ravines, whose sides, in their steepness, resembled precipices, the metal, as it became ground finer and finer from attrition and in the various processes of disintegration, finding its way beneath the alluvial deposit of the more open and remote rivers. Diggers there had not to penetrate as it were into the bowels of the earth for the precious metal, they found it in the stratum immediately under the earthy deposit, either associated with the hard-packed gravelly subsoil, or in the holes or pockets of the water-worn rocks, and sometimes, like

* Fossicking means picking, prying, or examining minutely.

† Shafts, like those in coal mines, are the artificial holes sunk perpendicularly to reach the metal or mineral.

‡ Drives are the horizontal borings radiating from the bottom of the shafts.

mosaic-work, laminated in the friable sandstone. They rarely worked below the surface, and always close by the margins of brooks or rivers, coming tentwards after the day's toil, clean and washed, without stain or soil on their apparel.

But Ballarat affords no indications of violent volcanic parturition. There is nothing in the tournure of its rounded ranges that could not be seen in any ordinary steppe, plain, or prairie. There is no leviathan system of mountain chains at all contiguous. The precious metal there spreads out and subsides on the pipeclay bottom of flat, wide-spread plains, or settles in great subterranean gutters deep down below the surface, in the entrails of broad elongated slopes, miscalled gullies. It is scarcely ever found in payable quantities in the stratum just beneath the alluvial deposit. On the contrary, the digger is obliged to sink his shaft through stratum after stratum, from fifty to sixty, eighty to ninety, and now to over three hundred feet, before he reaches the embowelled treasure, and he then emerges with the wash stuff in a coating of yellow muck, as if he were clothed from top to toe in a complete suit of chamois-leather. I am therefore unable, for the life of me, to imagine by what comparative process the analogy is traced, where, according to all ordinary rules, everything appears to be in direct contrast.

Coming in amongst the diggers, nothing could possibly be more unlike in external appearance than that of the Californian and the Ballaratian. There was an air of comely chivalry about the former, bearded like a pard, with his steeple-crowned sombrero, and his wide coloured flannel shirt, girthed in above the hips with a red sash, that was stuck round with knives, daggers, and revolvers; while the latter, in the common-place garb of an ordinary navvie, without any more attractive-looking weapon than his tobacco-knife,

worked like a horse, above and below ground, by night and by day, in a panoply of mud, as if he took minute baths in a thick solution of yellow-ochre. Although I thought I had derived a tolerably accurate notion of digging operations from oral description, I was wholly unprepared for the reality, and as I stood on the platform where the windlass is worked, and peered down the clean, straight, dry shafts, rounded and perpendicular as the tunnel of a steamer, or into the wet ones, squared and slabbed with mechanical accuracy, I almost fancied that Victorian digging was a special trade, followed out by strict mathematical rules; and I had very little difficulty in making up my mind, from the specimens then before me, that Ballarat at least was no field for the amateur or 'prentice digger, which also seemed to be an opinion very generally shared in by my now numerous companions. I could detect a shadow of apprehension overcasting the features of my young Scotch friends and my salt-water comrades as they looked down the holes at the diminuent mannikins, working away, up to their hips in water, by the dim light of a twinkling little candle. I was rather amused as two of the sailors, who had made very free with the brandy-bottle, were roaring out in chorus, at the end of each verse of our great national and nautical melody, "Britons never shall be slaves," to hear them thus angrily addressed from a yellow digger who just appeared above ground from a deep wet hole: "Shut up, you pair of bloody fools; only take my place below there for six hours, and see whether Britons ever can be slaves or not."

But further particulars anon. My immediate business was to find my digging friends, so I took the route leading to the post-office, to drop them a line (as I heard all diggers called on Saturdays there), and then look out for quarters. I advised my companions to come also, as they would then be

sure of getting disinterested advice; but the sailor troop remained, and pitched their tent on the side of Canadian Gully.*

The post-office was further on, in the direction of the Government camp, on the hill above Golden Point, where the first grand discovery was made; but being then falsely supposed to be worked out, it was pretty nearly deserted, except by fossickers, and some few individual diggers engaged in washing over tail heaps. By the way, I must also except two small parties of Chinese—the first I had seen in the colony—who were working two deep wet deserted holes on the edge of the creek. The St. Martin's-le-Grand of Ballarat was a very primitive establishment, contained within a moderate-sized log cabin, the greater portion of which, even after subtracting the household corner, was devoted to general business, and the person who wanted an ounce of tobacco was attended to before the man in quest of letters. The whole exterior of the edifice was papered over with quaintly-worded and ingeniously-spelled advertisements in writing. If you could find a vacant space you were at liberty to occupy it; but woe betide you if caught either in pulling off or overriding a previously posted notice, which, under pick-and-shovel law, were allowed to remain until they fell off in scabs, like a poor man's plaister. I annex a few as a general specimen:

If this should meet the eye of John Tims he will hear of his shipmate at Pennyweight Flat, next tent to the tub and cradle.

The sign of a store, I presume; but if not so understood, rather a vague direction in a district like Pennyweight Flat, where some thousands were at work, each party with a tub and cradle.

* It is to be remarked that sailors, as a class, have been proverbially fortunate on all the Victorian diggings.

James dakin notyces the publik agin thrustin his wife.

Patt Flynn calls on biddy to return to the tint forninst the cross roads.

Ten pounds reward for my black mare. No questions asked nor ideas insinuated.

But no indication where the reward was payable.

For sale, several householt an kulenary articles, as also a numerous frackshun of odds an ends, at the Tent oppsite the Frenchman's store at the Ureka.

I paid a shilling at the post-office counter for a sheet of paper and liberty to write a line to my friend, and an advertisement, for which I fortunately found a vacancy; but after dropping my note in the box, and in the act of wafering up my notice, a young man who read it over my shoulder said "he thought he knew my friend and party, and if I would accompany him to Prince Regent's Gully, he would take me to them." This was very agreeable information, and I most cheerfully went along with him. It was, he said, very probable that the party was at work; nevertheless, we went to the tent in the first instance, and found W——n at home, or rather in front, chopping wood for the fire. He recognised me at once; but, as the Yankees say, "I couldn't realise him anyhow" for some moments, in his tawny suit, with a long clotted beard dangling with small pea-nuts of ochre, and his face leprous with dried blobs of the same delightful auriferous compound. I introduced my companions, and, after celebrating the meeting in the usual style, we went up the gully to their shaft, to see the remainder of the boys. They were hard at work, but as T——e at the windlass recognised me he nearly dropped the bucket he was unhitching back into the hole. R—b—n came to the surface, and H——t from the puddling-tub, to join in the welcome; and it was soon agreed to knock off work for the remainder of the day—then two o'clock. T——e took charge of us, to show the lions of the neighbourhood, and the others went

home to prepare a special meal in celebration of the visit. We first crossed the range to the empty shrine which was erst the repository of the celebrated nugget—the Mecca of all digging pilgrims. Empty did I say? We found this natural treasure-chest nearly full of muddy water, situated half way up on the hip of a quick slope, a proof in itself of the changes which the face of the country must have undergone since the auriferous deposits found a final resting-place, for the simple laws of gravitation would forbid the possibility of a solid chunk of gold, 137 lbs. weight, remaining on the side of a hill while comparatively unponderous matter settled down at an apparently lower level. But the obvious explanation is, that the channel of the original water-course, in which the auriferous soil was carried, cleared its bed along the tough pipeclay bottom, on the level where the nugget was found, at a depth of sixty-five feet, the waves of earthy and alluvial matter, still in a partial state of solution, rolling sluggishly over it before settling down to a consistent state of irregularity, something like the wavy uneven surface of a strand when the tide retires, leaving it bare and hard. I do not pretend or presume to offer this suggestion as a scientific explanation of the great geological enigma which still remains to be solved, simply because I am very far from being a pundit in these abstruse doctrines; but, according to those palpable every-day appearances which meet the eye of the least inquiring person, it strikes me there is some leaven of plausibility in it. This hole, after being first opened for a few feet, was shepherded* by three different parties, each going through the form of taking out a few shovelfuls of soil in fulfilment of the digging code, and keeping a watch on the adjoining holes to see if the lead should be

* Shepherding means keeping passive possession of a hole, and keeping watch around for the run of the gutter.

struck, but, such not being the case, the last party, after sinking sixty feet, forsook it, and so it remained deserted for some time, until a party of new chums struck into it to make their maiden essay at digging, more for the purpose of taking an initiatory lesson in the art of shaft-sinking than with the expectation of making their fortune. But lo! after clearing off three feet of dirty stuff, one of the lime-juicers struck his pick on a lump of something not hard enough for stone nor soft enough for clay, which yielded a dull muffled sound to his blow. He struck again with the same result, and again too; then, sinking a hole at the edge to prize the obstacle out of the way with a bar, a corner of the nugget was revealed, and its precious nature disclosed to his delightful view, brought to light after a dark entombment of ages. The lucky novices, though charmed no doubt at their discovery, did not permit their wild excitement to overmaster their prudence. One was despatched to the camp for a guard of honour to escort it to the treasury, and during his absence the others discovered around the bed of the monster a litter of little nuggets, to the value of about 300*l.* Thus, in a few hours, those fortunate diggers dug up 7000*l.* worth of gold, which enabled them to leave the colony with their piles within a month of their arrival.

While still sitting round the hole, musing and chatting on the strange vicissitudes of life, and the infinite mutability of fortune, we were favoured with no very pleasing exemplification in our own persons by the unexpected appearance of a "brace of traps,"* who demanded our licenses; and so far from being satisfied with our explanations, vouched by T——e, whom they knew, they were rude and insolent, and, pretending to discredit our statements, ordered us to march

* The police in the diggings went by the name of traps—an obsolete sobriquet at home.

as prisoners to the camp, first to pay our 5*l.* fines, and then take out our licenses. Expostulation was vain; promises were sneered at; nothing short of 20*l.*, that is, 5*l.* each, could procure our liberation; so off we marched in the worst of humour. The first mandarin before whom we were brought took the cue from the captors, pretending to laugh at "our ruse," assuming, at the same time, an air of menace, in which he hinted at locking up in default; but on asking "if one of his brother commissioners, to whom I had a letter of introduction from a certain person in authority at head-quarters, was in the camp," the matter assumed another complexion. The other commissioner soon arrived, and, glancing at the signature, he grasped my hand, and shook it almost to dislocation; but had I not had the letter the consequences would have been both expensive and disagreeable. Reflecting on this, I began for the first time to think that the digger outcry against official tyranny and exaction was not altogether a baseless grievance. I could well imagine the state of feeling likely to be generated by a persistance in such a system of arbitrary persecution, and I was not surprised when it reached its climax soon afterwards.

On our return to Prince Regent's Gully, evening was fast advancing, and I had opportunities of seeing the domestic varieties of digger life. There was one thing quite apparent, that the generality of the tents were of the most flimsy description, and side-glances into their interiors seldom discovered any traces of comfort, seldom of decency; scarcely any had chimneys attached, so that all the cooking was done in the open air, but all of them were surrounded by hosts of mongrel dogs of the most noisy and snappish breed. There was also another noticeable feature in these diggings—particularly as compared with those in California—which was the large proportion of women—I was on the point of writing

the softer sex, but that would have been a misnomer, for the most callous specimens of the male creation I ever encountered were mere green pulp in comparison with some of the granite-grained viragoes I had the honour of meeting in the "field of the cloth of gold" in the new world.

We found a plentiful dinner, in a rough way, awaiting us, which we got through sitting astride on the long back log of the fire. The story of our sticking up by the police was discussed in bitter terms before a large circle who joined us in the course of the evening, and, from certain rumours, strengthened by the coincidence that the morrow would be a birthday of some distant member of the royal family, long odds were laid that there would be a "license hunt" to celebrate the occasion and supply the cellars of the authorities; for in that spirit of misrepresentation which grows out of antagonism the diggers avouched "that the commissioners and police divided the black mail they levied on these occasions," urging that the impunity from all possible accountability incited them to this profitable pastime. "How the bloody hell can a commissioner be found out in his robbery," urged a violent guest, "when, after catching fifty poor fellows in a gully, he will take a couple of pounds round, bail for their appearance in the morning? as if any of them would be such bloody fools as to go claim their bail, by paying a 5*l.* fine instead, and 30s. besides for a license. We're not such bloody asses as they take us for; as if we didn't know that Commissioner ——, and Inspector ——, and Police-officer —— could never manage to live at the rate of 5000*l.* a year each on their salaries, big as they are, only for the license pickings." "Ay, and Bill," chimed in another, "to say nothin' of the kumsayriat,* which, any child knows, is another dead

* Intended to convey commissariat, an establishment peculiarly obnoxious to suspicion. I do believe so high as 150*l.* per ton was paid for hay in

robbery. How mighty green we all are to believe that the camp hay last year cost 150*l.* a ton, and no back hand given." "But don't mention on no account," added another, "the nice tips the beaks get for a granting of spirit licenses." "Oh, b—— the lot," exclaimed a vehement little man, who had been suppressing his wrath; "who's to blame? nobody but ourselves. Why don't you take my advice?" This was followed by a lull, when I ventured to ask the nature of his counsel. "Why, then, as you want to know, since the Government won't give satisfaction, to take it on our own hook." An explanation which was followed by a burst of applause and hurrahs, and cries of "By G—d, we'll do it!"

The effects of the day's hard work, and the time for the night gangs going to work, soon diminished the group at our fireside; and as we were left alone, with the exception of a neighbouring storekeeper, Mr. S—d—r, who will remember the evening, I changed the topic, but not until my friends assured me there was mischief brewing, and that unless there was some change or reform introduced in gold-field management, a serious reckoning would ensue, for there was much truth at the bottom of all the grumbling. I sought advice for my young friends, suggesting they should take employment at wages for a time, until they put enough together to start on their own account, a period which could not be remote, as good men were then readily hired at 1*l.* per day and their keep, which would bring the party in clear 18*l.* per week. However, Mr. S—d—r said, if they were steady and industrious they could do still better, by washing over tailings on their own account, and he volunteered, on my introduction,

1852. I myself was aware of 90*l.* being paid in 1853 for a large lot, exclusive of carriage to the camp; and I also knew that Mr. B*y**t of T***g**r had several contracts at 60*l.* per ton of 2000 lbs.

not only to furnish them supplies on credit, but to let them have a small tent and tools, abandoned to him by a drunken customer, until they could conveniently pay for them. I thus got my protégés off my hand most agreeably to my own feelings, and, *nolens volens*, was obliged to take T——e's stretcher, the boys agreeing to bivouac round the fire for the remainder of the night.

On the following morning, after an early but substantial breakfast, we went to instal the Scotch lads in their new establishment, and point them out a locality in which they could commence operations, and, returning by a short cut, we came across the sailor party, who had made the purchase of a hole for 15*l*., in which the captain assured me with great glee he had himself picked up several specs of gold. My friends smiled, but were silent, T——e whispering to me it was a regular plant—a salted hole.* As I shall not again have occasion to revert to this party, I may as well here relate the particulars and result of their purchase, which is "confirmation strong" of sailors' luck. After parting with them on the previous forenoon they were picked up by a tippling loafer, subsequently pointed out to me, who soon took their measure, marking them down for prey. He was profuse in his advice and in his offers of service. He dilated on the expense and delay of beginning a new hole, recommending them to buy one half down, which he assured them might be as lucky as any, giving the great nugget-hole as a case in point. He did not experience much difficulty in bringing them over to his views, nor in finding a friend who had a hole for sale. So the bargain was concluded and the money paid, but the Mentor disappeared. Nevertheless, the sailor party bought a windlass, which they rigged in ship-

* Salting a hole is sprinkling it artificially, with the view of perpetrating a cheat, as I described.

shape, and went to work unsuspectingly. The hole was about forty-five feet when they commenced, and as they approached eighty they came upon as fine a gutter of washing-dirt as any previously hit upon in the gully. It averaged all round a good ounce to the tub, giving them an aggregate of over 3300*l.*, which, perhaps, would have been trebled, only that the lead turned at a quick angle, leaving their claim before it traversed more than one-third of its length. It appears that the disinterested man who sold it, dividing the proceeds with his worthy agent, came upon a false bottom,* which in those early days was not easily discriminated from the real one, and he sold his interest in it, supposing it to be valueless, first peppering it with a little gold-dust to season the bargain. The swindler who promoted the cheat duly appeared, when the news spread, to urge his claim to a bonus on the fortune he transferred, but I was instrumental in unmasking his rascality, and preventing his obtaining any further funds on false pretences.

My friends had their hole in a forward state, and determined on bottoming it, although, from unerring indication in those more in the heart of the gully, they had little or no expectations of making a hit. But to this result they were tolerably reconciled, having had some good strokes of luck previously. Their hole was a dry one so far, and was excavated in a style of finished workmanship as circular as if it was worked from a fixed centre, perfectly perpendicular, as they showed me by a stone in a rope-sling, and wonderfully smooth besides, the surface-water as well as the drift drainage under the surface stratum being intercepted and carried away by means of a circular cutting encircling the

* False bottom is generally a whitish, adhesive stratum found at various depths, and in the early days was frequently mistaken for the real pipeclay bottom immediately over the rock in which the gold is always found.

shaft-mouth, which was constructed to discharge itself on the sloping side of their claim. I prepared for my first descent by changing my coat for a blue shirt, and then, with one foot in a noose and a hold of the rope, I was let down very comfortably. When landed at the bottom, I had a still better opportunity of appreciating the skill with which the shaft had been carried down, for it was as plumb on all sides as if bored by an auger, perfectly free from the slightest bulge, not a protrusion, and about two feet ten inches in diameter, the space within which an ordinary man can work with his pick from the centre all round; and certainly, seeing the seemingly wild, indifferent manner in which diggers use the pick, it is positively wonderful to observe the nice perfection they are able to achieve. But Raphael is said, in his inspired moments, to have made the chips of marble fly about in showers under the rapid strokes of his divine chisel, and perhaps the *auri sacra fames* lends a species of profane inspiration to the digger in the use of his peculiar instrument.

I was not permitted to indulge very long in my meditations, for W—l—n shouted down, "Come up, boys—come along quick—the game is started!" and as I was being hoisted up I heard the swelling uproar and the loud chorus of "Joes!"* from every side. As I gained the surface everybody was in commotion, diggers with their licenses lowering down their mates without them; others, with folded arms, cursing the system and damning the Government; some "stealing away" like hares when hounds are in the neighbourhood; and several "tally-ho'd," bursting for points where they

* Joe is a term of opprobrium hurled after the police ever since the diggings commenced, but the derivation is still a mystery. Some commentators trace it to the Christian name of Mr. Latrobe; but this is an error; the ex-governor was never personally unpopular, except with the editor of the *Argus*.

could escape arrest, while "Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe!" resounded on all sides, the half-clad Amazons running up the hill-sides like so many bearers of the "fiery-cross," to spread to the neighbouring gullies the commencement of the police foray. The police, acting on a preconcerted plan of attack, kept closing in upon their prey, the mounted portion, under the commander-in-chief commissioner, occupying commanding positions on the elevated ridges to intercept escape or retreat. A strong body of the foot force, fully armed, swept down the gully in extended line, attended by a corps of light infantry traps in loose attire, like greyhounds on the slip, ready to rush from the leash as the quarry started. But the orders of the officers could not be heard, from the loud and continuous roars of "Joe! Joe! Joe!"—"Damn the b——y Government!—the beaks, the traps, commissioners, and all—the robbers, the bushrangers," and every other vile epithet that could be remembered, almost into their ears. At length, the excitement got perfectly wild, as a smart fellow, closely pursued by the men-hounds, took a line of the gully cut up with yawning holes, from which the crossing planks had been purposely removed, every extraordinary spring just carrying him beyond the grasp of capture, his tracks being filled the instant he left them, and the outstretched arm of the trap within an inch of seizure in the following leap. I myself was strangely inoculated with the nervous quiver of excitement, and I think I gave an involuntary cheer as the game and mettle of the digger began to tell. But now arose a terrific menacing outcry of "Shame! shame!—damnation!—treachery!—meanness!" which a glance in the direction of the general gaze showed me was caused by a charge of the mounted men on the high ground to head back the poor fugitive. I really thought a conflict would have ensued, for there was a mad rush to the point

where the collision was likely to take place, and fierce vows of vengeance registered by many a stalwart fellow, who bounded past me to join in the fray. A moment after, the mounted men wheeled at a sharp angle, and a fresh shout arose as another young fellow flew before them with almost supernatural fleetness, like a fresh hare started as the hunted one was on the point of being run down. I marvelled to see him keep the unbroken ground with the gully at his side impracticable for cavalry, but no, he made straight on for a bunch of tents with a speed I never saw equalled by a pedestrian. It was even betting, too, that he would have reached the screen first, when lo! he stopped short so suddenly as only just to escape being ridden down by the commissioner—the Cardigan of the charge—who seized him by the shirt-collar in passing. The rush of diggers now became diverted to the scene of caption. I hurried forward there too, although fearing I should witness the shedding of blood and the sacrifice of human life, but as I approached I was agreeably disappointed at hearing loud roars of laughter, and jeering outbursts of "Joe! Joe!" amidst which the crowd opened out a passage for the crestfallen heroes, who rode away under such a salute of opprobrious epithets as I never heard before, for the young fellow who led them off the idle chase stopped short the moment he saw the real fugitive was safe, coolly inquiring of his captor "what crime he was guilty of to be hunted like a felon." "Your license, you scoundrel!" was the curt reply. Upon which he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the document, to the ineffable disgust of their high mightinesses, who, in grasping at the shadow, had lost the substance.

It was a capital ruse, adopted in an emergency, and played with greater skill than if there had been a regular rehearsal. I flatter myself that I am a loyal man on the average, and a

respectable upholder of law and order, but I was unable to repress an emotion of gratification at the result of the chase, or an impulse of hero-worship as I sought the sole actor in the successful diversion to offer my congratulations. The myrmidons of the law now moved up the middle of the gully in close order, attended by anything but an admiring cortége, who made it a point never to let the cry of "Joe! Joe!" subside for a moment. Occasionally a license was demanded, and its production was the signal for fresh outbursts of the tumult; but the "license meet" was brought to a close by two other successful feints that were played off by a pair of diggers, who, simulating a guilty timidity, dropped themselves in a slide down their ropes into the bottoms of their wet holes, followed by a brace of traps with dashing gallantry, who chased them into the muddy drives, where the lurkers purposely crawled, to lead their pursuers into the muck. Of course they were hauled up in triumph, but the hallelujahs were quickly superseded by choking screams of "Joe! Joe!" when the prisoners produced their digging warrants. The commissioner did not venture on another "throw off," but moved away sullenly with his forces, to the tune of "Joe! Joe! Joe!" and expressions of regret "that he would have to drink the royal family's health after dinner at his own expense," and such-like observations. But the reflection which obtruded itself on me was the absolute loss which accrued to the public by the frequent recurrence of these digger hunts, in diverting thousands of industrious men from employment, who, at the lowest average of the day, would have produced half an ounce of gold to each hand; which, of course, had its indirect effect on trade and business—in fact, on the general prosperity of the colony.

The Government was naturally held responsible for this state of things, but the enormously increased expenses of

governing consequent upon the discovery of gold could not be defrayed without increased taxation, and the class who benefited by the discovery was that from which the Government, in the exercise of its discretion, sought to extract the necessary subsidies. But, all irresponsible as it was, still, having the semblance of a parliament, it would neither have been meet nor safe to have assumed an arbitrary power, and exercise it in the despotic abrogation of one tax and the imposition of another, without consulting the collective wisdom of the state, such as it was under the old system. Mr. Latrobe was nominally governor, but it is well known that in the exercise of his viceregal powers he conformed too closely to the routine of royalty by leaving his cabinet, or the heads of departments, as his advisers were popularly called, to do as they liked in their different spheres; and they did as they liked, having no parliament capable of controlling them. The head of the Commissariat bought hay and oats at prices that would have made Caligula stare, but the governor never murmured. The Auditor-General smoked his pipe and sang comic songs, without ever being "brought to book" by his Excellency. The Chief Commissioner of Gold-fields created appointments and dispensed a vast patronage with the passive assent of Mr. Latrobe. The Chief Commissioner of Police organised an *ad libitum* force, filling the ranks with his favourites, and lodging them in barracks of his own, without ever being questioned as to the number or the pay. The Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands allotted territorial principalities as his temper moved him. The Commissioner of Trade and Customs was a perfect autocrat in his department; and the Attorney-General, I believe, rarely embarrassed his chief by consultations on official routine. When Mr. Foster arrived and assumed the functions of Colonial Secretary, he was disposed, it is said, to introduce some mild

reforms into the administrative system, pending the introduction of the new constitution; but his resolution was weak, while the old clique was strong, so he was powerless. He claims the credit—I believe with justice—of desiring to abolish the license tax on taking the reins of office, and substituting the export duty on gold in its stead, but he was overruled by his colleagues and the Senate. So the odious impost remained, with all its grievous and demoralising effects, until a new viceregal dynasty succeeded, when it was only abolished to compromise a colonial revolution.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ballarat in 1853—A Reason for the crowding of lucky Diggers into Melbourne—The Government Camp of the Period—Stores and Storekeeping in Victoria contrasted with the System in California—Domestic Ménage of Storekeepers—Commence my Researches as a Fossicker—Favourable Reception in that Character—Discover Quantities of Gold in the Tail-stuff—The Discovery does not tend to improve the Operations of the Diggers—Surface Gold—Think of abandoning the Pen for the Pick—Modern Discoveries at Variance with the received Geological Theories—Perplexing Scarcity of Quartz at Ballarat—Absurd Reports of the Gold-fields Commissioner—The Gold-fields of Victoria peculiarly unsuited to the Amateur Digger—Mushrooms not the Produce of Sheep Ordure.

BALLARAT, at the time of my visit, was a digging, *et præterea nihil*. There was no town, no township, no village, nor any trading nucleus at any particular spot or locality. Every flat and gully had its sprinkling of stores and butchers' shops, and some few their bakeries, but there was no great local central depôt from which they took their supplies. There were no hotels,* no publics, no theatres, no places of amusement or public resort. No wonder, then, that diggers who, after months of incessant toil and privation, came upon their rich reward, should resort to the capital for a spell of relaxation before they commenced another such task; and when it is understood that Mount Alexander, Forest Creek, Bendigo, and M'Ivor were all similarly circumstanced, the

* Bath's Hotel was opened at the period to which I refer, the precursor of the number which succeeded.

vast influxes of affluent diggers crowding into Melbourne, and the tremendous impulse given to business by their enormous expenditure, ceases to furnish food for amazement, while there is the strange and still unaccounted-for feature to be superadded to this state of things, that on all the gold-fields the very richest leads had been discovered at the outset, whereby green diggers became impressed with the conviction that the treasure dug up in the novitiate of their profession was no more than a trifling earnest of the illimitable riches they were to disembowel on a future day, and easily led away by this delusion, they squandered and lavished amounts of wealth in a month that would have sufficed to found decent family inheritances for future generations.

To the eye of a casual observer like myself, taking the focus of aggregation as a guide, the Bakery Hill would have been the most likely and central site for the future city, but the hill beyond the flat on the other side of the Yarrowee,* on which the camp was temporarily erected, was the location chosen by Government, and in a spirit of antagonism, I suppose, the rival hill was the chosen rallying-point for the discontents. There the then all-potent *Argus* established its head-quarters; there agitating tribunes and the embryo rebels had their favourite rendezvous; and thence, when great public meetings were held to inveigh against the gold-field grievances and discuss their remedies, the voice of the people rolled in tones of thunder across the intervening space, fluttering the tent-flags of the grim officials. The camp of early 1853 was composed of irregular clusters of canvas tents, comfortable in their way, but without any adjunct of security. Even the treasure repository of the gold-receiver, which received the vast in-pourings of that unequal gold-field, and held over from escort to escort the

* Yarrowee is the name of the little river which runs through the Ballarat gold-field.

prodigious accumulations of gold-dust, was not composed of any more impregnable materials than Benjamin Edgington delights in putting together with needle and thread. The court-house alone aspired to primitive architectural pretensions in its slab-sided stateliness, being a generation in advance of the lock-up, a squat, ill-favoured hovel of green logs with a diseased bark on. I cannot pass over the stables, nor can I justly include them as part and parcel of the establishment, for it would be quite as literal to designate a paddock a bedroom as to call the bleak, howling wilderness of that day a stable. It had neither sides, ends, roof, nor mangers, but simply consisted of rows of naked poles, to which the poor shivering animals were hitched up, taking their feed off the ground. There was a large weatherboard building in process of erection intended to contain a mess and reading-room, which was the lion of the locality, and officials rubbed their hands in gleeful anticipations of the jolly times they would have when it was finished, while the wrathful digger would exclaim, "There's the place where the plunder of the digger hunts will be consumed."

There is only one other feature in the general outline of the gold-field which I feel called on to notice before coming to the topic of real and overtopping interest—its real natural wealth—and that is the calling of storekeeping, quite a unique one in its way, and distinctive from Californian practice at a similar age of digging development. For there (in California), drafts from different digging parties on the various fields mustered according to appointment, and travelled in large parties somewhat on the caravan principle, bringing back the seasonal supplies. But in Victoria digging and storekeeping are of coeval existence, and since the first opening of the gold-fields, wherever a group of prospecters*

* Prospecters are persons who go out on expeditions in search of new diggings.

settled down to test the mineral resources of the locality, no matter how stealthily soever they might have separated themselves from their previous neighbour, a store, containing all the requisites or necessaries they could possibly require, arose into existence almost as soon as their last tent-peg would be driven into the ground, while in great rushes, where tens of thousands swarmed, covering the ground as thickly as locusts, a full proportion of well-assorted stores, smiling with all their peculiar kaleidoscopic attractions and arrangements, almost anticipated the migratory flight, as if the proprietors were the lineal and direct heirs and assigns of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp.

Every store in Victoria has a flagstaff in front, from the top of which streams the ensign, with its kangaroo, opossum, pick and shovel, or any other ingenious device which may suggest itself to the astute proprietor, while its bottom is encircled by a travelling collar, with a long scope of chain attached, to enable a fierce dog to sweep all the approaches in the front. Store-dogs, too, are clever in their way, sufficiently sagacious to discriminate between the quizzing loafer and the genuine customer; and where their suspicions are aroused, the uproar they create is almost inconceivable, the furious plunges they make towards the enemy causing the ensign halliards to whip loudly against the flagstaff; but, strange to say, these awe-inspiring brutes are only fierce under constraint; woe betide you if they catch you while in their chains, but should a broken link liberate them, their ferocity at once dwindles into funk. I saw one of them who broke his chain in making a tiger bound at a stranger, but, instead of pursuing the fugitive, he turned and fled like a cur for shelter amongst the merchandise. The externals of a digging store are for the most part pillars of washing-pans, nests of buckets and Yankee tubs, cradles, and puddling-

tubs, interspersed with picks, shovels, gads, stone hammers, crow-bars, and bars of unwrought iron on the one side, confronted on the other by infirm stretchers, on which make-believe sacks of flour are reposing in silent proof of their great strength, being nothing, however, but sacks of imponderous bran, decorated with tin teapots and coffee-cans pendent from their hips, their middle and lower extremities embraced and bestrode by moleskin jacket and pantaloons. Side by side with the stretchers are coils of rope, with hatchets, hand-saws, and long ripping chisels, growing, like so many *lusus naturæ*, out of their centres, supported, contrary to all laws of association, except the rust, with flitches of odorous bacon and casks of travelled mess pork, and preserved fish in a state of decomposition. The internals generally consist of an odd medley of soft and hard goods, edibles and wearables, matches, jumpers, onions, Guernseys, pickles, side-combs, sardines, polkas, knives and forks, cigars, Glenfield's starch, tumblers, chocolate, crockery, clasp and butcher knives, worsted and percussion-caps, Windsor soap, preserved salmon, revolvers, bear's-grease and hair-oil, lobsters in tins, damp loaf sugar, muslins and calico, coffee in tins, blue and red blankets, second-hand confectionary, hammers and chisels, preserved fruits, reels of cotton, and red-herrings, with every variety of boots and shoes, from the thigh boot to the Oxford shoes, laced-up water-tights, with their thickly iron-shod soles, and women's leather-topped boots, and an infinity of other articles too numerous to mention.

At the end of the store a screen shuts off the small portion where the inmates reside, which is usually comfortable, in comparison with the surrounding households, although with scarcely any furniture save that strictly appertaining to the table and the culinary department, and that of the scantiest and plainest description—kegs doing duty for seats, trunks

for tables, bales of soft goods for couches, and every other want being supplied after a similar fashion. A deserted gold hole in the rear standing in the lieu of a refuse pit, which on some future day, long after nature has skinned over the orifice, will probably present curious matter for contemplation to unborn naturalists.

At our evening séances round the blazing log-fires in front of the tent I made a large circle of acquaintances, who all kindly expressed their readiness to give me any information they possessed, and afford me all facilities for examination and inquiry in my search for gold-fields, knowledge, and intelligence; and as I happened to be placed in the very centre of auriferous attraction, with the Canadian Gully on one side, the Prince Regent's on the other, with the Gravel-pits, the Red Hills, Dalton's and Winter's Flat contiguous, I resolved on profiting by the volunteer offers made me, while my friends were engaged in bottoming their hole; after which it was arranged that W—l—n was to take a fortnight's spell in Melbourne, and I was to take his place, changing the scene of operations to Dalton's Flat, then rising into repute with comparatively shallow sinking.

In fulfilment of my resolution, I provided myself with a tin basin and a handy pick, the accoutrement of a fossicker, determined to test the tailings in each district, being satisfied from my previous experience, and from seeing the rude and hurried manner in which the richest stuff was washed out, cradled, and run through the long lines, that a large, if not the largest, proportion of the pure gold was lost. This impression was strengthened from the crowds of professed fossickers who hung on the outskirts of the various local diggings, driving a flourishing business in rewashing the refuse of the haut ton of the gold-fields, who, unlike the rich man of old, did not grudge to their needy brethren the crumbs

which fell from their superabundance. Further confirmation was derived from my canny Scotch friends, who were already beginning to look up in the world from the profits of their secondary occupation; for they not only paid a first instalment of their liability to Mr. S—d—r, but had marked out a claim, which one of them was occupied in shepherding, quite confident, as they told me, that before any of the surrounding ones could be bottomed, they would be in a position to commence a hole on their own account, and ascend on the social ladder from the non-commissioned grade of fossickers to the rank of diggers.

As it soon became hinted about that I was merely in quest of information, and had no intention of settling down or trenching on the common law rights or privileges of the regular accredited fossickers, so far from being regarded with an eye of jealousy, or looked on as an intruder, I was quite a favourite, and was gladly answered any question, or accorded any aid I happened to require. I began by trying some dishfuls of tail-dirt, taken from the heaps of parties with whom I was intimate; and although the thick, turbid state of the water in the gully was anything but favourable for so nice an operation as catching the very fine gold closely commingled, as it always is, with almost impalpable black sand, I never washed a panful without at worst getting an appreciable quantity of the precious metal, and frequently close upon half a pennyweight. I showed my acquaintances the results of my experiments, and endeavoured to shame them out of their wilful waste, but the standard of daily remuneration—the returns per tub—were so exorbitant in these days, they only smiled in commiseration at my small and narrow estimates of recompense. I tried several heaps in the neighbouring gullies with about the same average, so that I began accumulating such a nice little heap in my

match-box,* I entertained serious notions of putting my note-book aside altogether and adopting my new profession. Before extending the sphere of my fossicking operations beyond the neighbourhood, I tried another experiment, from being given to understand that its riches were discovered from surface deposits which were altogether abandoned in contempt when the first good hole was bottomed, and buried beneath the deep strata of stuff taken out in the progress of shaft-sinking. In this operation I took a shovel to my aid, and after two days' hard work I cleared out a space eight feet square, which, at a depth of a little over eight feet, brought me to the original surface stratum, and here I found the soil pretty generally impregnated with tolerably fine gold—indeed, to an extent that would have paid well for sluicing or cradling, even at the wages rates of the day. In my hole the auriferous dirt varied in depth from one foot to twenty inches, though some old hands assured me they knew that in places it went so deep as four feet. Without overtoiling myself, I averaged half an ounce per day for the three days I was engaged in washing out my hole. This fact I made known in the neighbourhood, without inducing any other enterprising individual to go and do likewise. Even the fossicking tribe were so perfectly content with their own branch of business, they did not try a single experiment of the kind, and to the present day the vast surface deposits of those localities remain inhumed in their primeval cemeteries, and will so continue until associated capital and the powers of machinery are brought to bear on some comprehensive and wholesale plan of elimination working in connexion with some more improved process of dis-

* The common lucifer-match box, in the absence of deer in Australia, supplies the place of the buckskin purse of the Californian miner, and when choke-full of gold-dust offers a strong contrast in value when compared with its original contents.

integration than that in use even at the present day—the alluvial digging in Victoria.

I afterwards extended the range of my rambles to all the flats and gullies comprised in the district, which then was considered as Ballarat proper, and while in no single instance, out of some thousands of trials, did I ever finish up a washing without at least getting—in mining slang—the colour, I on numerous occasions got returns that surprised me. In order still further to refine on my second-hand discoveries, which struck me at the time as important, and which I still consider as eminently deserving the most serious attention of capital and science, I made some common dish-washing experiments in the tail-washings of the fossickers, and I found that even the refuse of those diggings scavengers contained considerable quantities of fine gold. When I say common dish-washing experiments, I do not intend to convey that I went through the operation in a hurried or careless manner, but I do affirm that I took no other means of securing the gold from those tailings than in procuring cleaner water for the concluding part of the operation. But satisfying myself, even in that primitive way, that they were not wholly valueless, I took home to the tent on five different occasions, from different localities, dishfuls of these fossickers' tailings, and from these five parcels, subjected to the amalgamating test of quicksilver and milk-warm water, I obtained twenty-two grains of very fine gold, which goes far to satisfy me that the day is not far distant when large fortunes will be extracted from the deserted gold-fields of Victoria, by putting every particle of dirt from the rock bottom to the surface through some cleansing and amalgamating process. And then I believe the resources of this inexhaustible country will not nearly have reached their adult stage of development, a conjecture I am

perfectly warranted in indulging in from the present results of mining enterprise, for the rock is now no longer regarded as the bottom; the miner now blasts through the solid blue stone or trap reef, and at depths in many instances of three hundred feet, discovers highly remunerative, nay, enriching deposits of the precious metal, all apparently trending towards the west, as if converging to a point, and as many of the principal leads have united in their progress, the orthodox creed of the miner is, that a point exists at which they all unite in a real river of gold. One thing, however, is certain—that the more modern discoveries of the miner—who ceases to be digger when he comes to deal with igneous rock—prove the utter fallacy of the conclusion arrived at by the Scientific Mining Commission appointed under the auspices of the late Sir Charles Hotham, which would almost lead the public to believe that, as far as gold is concerned, the blue stone or lava rock (trap, as I believe it is technically called) is the floor of creation, leaving nothing metallic or mineralogical to be sought for beneath it, though common sense—which unfortunately is a popular paradox—would favour the conjecture that when all substances were in a state of fusion the heavier would attain the lower level; and in my shallow and limited knowledge of metallurgy, it would appear to me as an inevitable consequence, that if six several metals were melted in a crucible, and then allowed to cool, they would all form distinct strata, the lighter forming the upper, the heavier the lower stratum, while with particles in a state of aqueous admixture the same result would ensue, though not perhaps in so thoroughly distinctive a character. But whether gold was distributed by volcanic or aqueous convulsion, it would naturally suggest itself to ordinary comprehension that wherever it exists—if it does at all exist—in enormous masses, it should take its place according to its gravity, and that when

nature succeeded chaos the laws of gravitation had their influence in the peculiar arrangement of matter. But, as unlearned people have no right to think or dilate on these abstruse and profound subjects, I will for the present abstain from any further conjecture, and content myself in offering a few nuts for cracking to those deep-thinking savans who see so much further into the millstone of nature than their fellow-creatures.

It is universally known, amidst all the puzzles of the gold question, that quartz is the matrix of the precious metal, holding it in its undisturbed or primeval state, in strict embrace—if I may use an understandable word, in ignorance of the technical term—and it was generally held as an invariable rule that, notwithstanding the innumerable and extraordinary caprices of nature, the evidences of original association or connexion between the matrix and the metal could not be wholly obliterated—that, whether the segregation was effected by means of volcanic convulsion, or by the more cognisable agency of falls and water-courses, a traceable chain of the early affinity is always to be found by the close examiner, or prospecter, as he is vulgarly called. In California, quartz was denominated the gold blossom, and no one thought of looking for gold unless the quartz gravel appeared as an indication of its contiguity; and even in Victoria the popularly received theory of the alluvial deposits is, that the quartz reefs were at one time upheaved above the surface when the action of the atmosphere, and the operation of rains and surface water, brought about decomposition and disintegration, scattering the gold over the soil, or concentrating it in gully-gutters or leads, the richness of the gully being altogether dependent on that of the contiguous reef; and certainly, in many cases, particularly in the Bendigo district, Tarrangona, and others, nuggets and large specimens are very generally found in the alluvial workings,

so mingled and associated with quartz as to favour this conjecture. But, like most of all the other conjectures about the formation and distribution of gold, just as it is about being solemnly ratified as an infallible article of doctrine, some undreamt-of exception arises and shakes the plausible theory on its sandy foundation, producing new schisms and heresies in this grand mundane mammonite religion. Ballarat furnishes just such an exception; for in all the great and glorious leads in the Canadian or the Prince Regent's Gullies, in the Gravel-pits or the many other well-developed diggings in that locality, there is almost a total absence of quartz reefs; and that remarkable, coarse, white, rounded quartz drift, or that of a newer and poorer, of an angular character, which are deemed the invariable associates of golden deposits, only form a very insignificant proportion of the tail-stuff to be found in that unequalled field. In all the holes I examined, and in all the most remarkable ones concerning which I made the most minute and particular inquiries, the presence of quartz was the exception to the general rule. In all the great leads its appearance was rare, and only in small thin veins, which, if of gold in their integrity, would constitute only an insignificant comparison to the quantities contained in the gutters. While on Golden Point and the Black Hill, where considerable reefs exist, the scientific analogy is again completely inverted, so much so, that the working in quartz there has been discontinued, after ruining several, who, stimulated by their faith in the geological doctrine, risked their capital in the enterprise. In fact, I think I am correct in asserting that at the present time (November, 1857), the only quartz mill in the Ballarat district is one at Golden Point, which is engaged crushing the drift-gravel contained in the tailings, a series of facts which so completely subverts the preconceived speculations of the learned

in these matters, that it is to be hoped they will devote their inquiring minds to find out another and a truer explanation of this apparently anomalous state of things. When, in the chronological course of my rambles, I come to deal more at length and detail with the quartz question, I shall be again compelled to come more directly in conflict with the reports of the commission appointed by the Government to inquire into the mining resources of the colony, which give currency to opinions and pronounce dogmatic dicta wholly unsupportable in practice, at variance with the existing state of things, and which, moreover, are calculated most seriously to prejudice and retard the development of the mineral resources of Victoria.

Writing a desultory book of this sort, the poor scribe is most fortunately exempt from the stern discipline of the dramatic writers, and I therefore have to request my gentle reader to assign me whatever time best suits his convenience —within the limits of six weeks—as the period during which I was engaged in my fossicking experiments; after which I will take him a limited, but I trust instructive, stroll, descending, examining, and exploring shafts and drives—wet and dry, slabbed and unslabbed, deep and shallow, rich and poor, as the case may be—always premising, lest it should excite his suspicion or curiosity, that the abandoned holes with lob sides and hen-nest bottoms which I may hurry him past without a passing peep or observation, are in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the maiden essays of these kid-gloved, soft-handed, high-stooled, counter-jumping, raisin-picking, tape-measuring, brief-drafting, special-pleading, demme-uttering gents, who were unable to settle down at their distinctive callings in Melbourne or the Pivot City without in the first instance proving satisfactorily, or perhaps painfully, to their aching loins and arms, that digging is "a mockery, a delusion,

and a snare," and that the gold which they saw the improvident diggers sowing broadcast in the public-houses and depraved haunts, as if it were obtained on the surface by the simple effort of stooping for it, is locked up in more inaccessible safety than that in the bullion vaults of the Bank of England—the military stratum, of course, always excepted—for, start a Cornish miner and a swell cracksman on equal terms, the one on the surface at the Gravel-pits, and the other outside the mason work in Threadneedle-street, and I will back the latter fifty to one to bag his booty before the other reaches the gutter. California, shallow as were its placer workings, proved even a poser to those classes. It is not, therefore, to be expected that they can have any chance, except, perhaps, in the ratio of "angels' visits," in dealing with the "long-gutted" holes of Victoria, where every digging has its "New Chum Flat" or "New Chum Gully," christened because of the shallowness of the sinking and its supposed suitability to the Johnny Newcomes, or amateur diggers. Lest I should forget introducing it in a more appropriate place, I will tack on to the end of this chapter another discovery I made in the course of my fossicking career—that would more properly befit Mr. Timbs's periodical entitled "Things not Generally Known"—which is, that mushrooms do not spring up from sheep ordure, for I saw the chumps and grooves of them covering the tumuli of pipeclay thrown up from the bottom of deep holes, at a level where sheep never trod, except, perhaps, the progenitors of the pair that Noah selected when sailing in the *Great Eastern* of the olden times. I never saw mushrooms exceeding them in perfection; and I am speaking within limits when I declare that, from a small mound of pipeclay, I could have filled the largest wheelbarrow.

CHAPTER XIV.

The unwritten Laws of the Diggings—A brief Outline—Shepherds—Shicers and Crown Jewels—The most watchful Shepherds sometimes outwitted—An Illustration or Ground Section of a Digger's Shaft—Exemplar Shaft—Mode of Working—Danger from slovenly Slabbing—From foul Air—My fearful State while exploring a Drive—An auriferous Head of Hair—Diggers of the early contrasted with those of the present Day—An unlucky Party—Mr. M'C——n's Claim—Singular Phenomenon—Obscurity of its Origin—Scene of a melancholy Tragedy—Kind Feeling of the Populace—The Jewellers' Shops—The Blacksmith's Claim—Its unparalleled Richness—The aggregate Yield 55,200*l.*—The Dalgleish Claim—The Waldridge Claim—Extraordinary Yield from a Tub at the Gravel-pit—The Red Hill Lead—A Symposiac at Ballarat—The Scene animate and inanimate—Its Conclusion—Cause of the Surface Nakedness of Ballarat.

Before continuing my narrative, I think it would be well to give a brief outline of the code of unwritten laws under which the affairs at the gold-fields were administered in 1853, and also to append a plain sketch, which, I hope, will conduce to the better understanding of my descriptions. I should suppose, from the similarity of the rules and regulations in vogue in Victoria to those pre-existing in California, that perhaps Mr. Hargraves imported them together with his experience from the latter country, and that the Australian Governments adopted them with such modifications and additions as the different aspect of the southern gold-fields called for. It was competent for any person, finding an unoccupied space on any flat or gully, to mark out a space

of twenty-four feet as his claim, and all the mineral deposits discovered in that area from the surface to the bottom, within perpendicular lines, was his property, guaranteed by Government authority and power, provided the party worked under the sanction of a license, then fixed at the rate of 30s. per month; but wanting that, he worked without legal warrant, and any other person possessed of a license might jump* the claim, even after the golden deposits were come to, as a subsequent payment, or one made under constraint, constituted no protection, not having a retrospective effect. There was no specified time fixed on for the carrying down of shafts, first, because they vary so much in depth and in the nature of the strata through which they are sunk; secondly, because the influx of water is so capricious and irregular it admitted of no approach even to equitable definement, while the progress of operations was arbitrarily regulated by the quantity which came in, for in what were designated very wet holes the baling out of the water consumed more time and labour than the sinking itself. But over and above these obstacles to defining a graduated period, the wide and illimitable differences in the natural endowments, the physical abilities of diggers, completely precluded the possibility of inventing any sliding-scale calculated to give general satisfaction, or that would afford a sufficient protection to men of weakly bodies but energetic minds in competing with the case-hardened Cornish miner, or the iron-thewed navvy. It was, therefore, concluded best to leave time an open question; and so long as a licensed digger could prove to the satisfaction of the commissioner that he did any amount of daily work in his hole, let it be of ever so trifling a description, and left any mining implements in it as a token of occupa-

* Jumping is the technical term for ejecting an unlicensed digger—the person ejecting literally jumping into the hole.

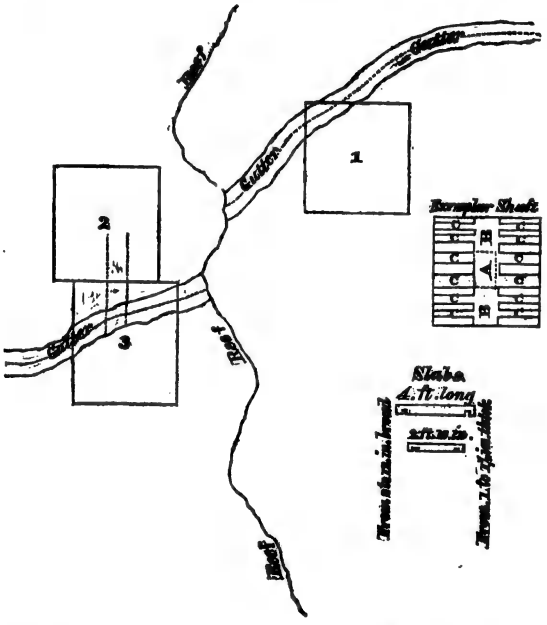
tion, his right of possession was held to endure. This led to the evil of shepherding (explained in a previous chapter), when indolent parties contented themselves with throwing out a few shovelfuls of stuff each day in order to eke out the time until the more industrious diggers around them arrive at the bottom, and then, if the gutter is found to trend in their direction, they commence energetic operations in going down themselves; but, if it turns out otherwise, they desert the holes as shicers,* devoting them to the Queen with certain execrations, and the ceremony of dashing down stones, which are designated the "Crown Jewels."

In some cases, however, the shepherds are well and deservedly mulcted for their slothfulness by diggers who, after exhausting the gutter within the limits of their own claims, continue following it into the shepherd's territory, without the possibility of detection or prevention; for at best the shepherd can have no stronger clue than suspicion, as he durst not go down his neighbour's shaft without permission—never very liberally accorded between diggers—and of course certain to be refused in cases such as I allude to. He might seek the intervention of the commissioner, but in vain, unless armed with some better proof than vague suspicion; for that functionary, in most cases constitutionally averse from the bore of superfluous occupation, has or had quite enough of legitimate and undeniable calls to attend to without opening the door to a class of cases which would increase the evils of shepherding, and multiply them to the utter exclusion of *bonâ fide* business. The only course open, under such circumstances, to dispel or confirm the suspicion, and redress the encroachment, is for the shepherds to go down themselves, when they

* Shicer, a term applied to deserted holes in the Victorian diggings, having a different signification in the German language, from which it is derived.

very frequently find the bottom a perfect honeycomb, the natural purse alone remaining, without a speck of the rich contents.

I subjoin a simple sketch, designed to convey a proximate notion of the random way in which claims are marked out, as well as to show the irregular and capricious course taken by the gold leads, or gutters, as they are called. We will suppose the page to stand $\frac{N}{W+E}$, the reef running North and South, and the gutter, as it most generally does, East and West.



It will be observed that at the point where the reef intersects the gutter the lead takes a capricious jump. Sometimes it breasts the reef, as water does a ledge of rock, going

straight over; but in cases where the reef dips, or takes a shelving inclination, the gutter, diverging sometimes at a sharp angle, crosses at a point where it meets less obstruction. In cases of this kind, in the early days (1853), the lead was said "to be lost," some supposing it to have sunk suddenly, others that it ran out from exhaustion, and others, adopting the analogy of intermitting rivers, that it would rise again somewhere in the neighbourhood. So that the diggers of that particular locality, like a pack of hounds at fault, would take a wide range of casts about, in expectation of picking up the scent again, and when one party hit it off, another scene of shepherding commenced, to see the line it would next follow.

Let us suppose that No. 1 party in the sketch having gone down, and finding the lead passing through a corner of their claim in a southward trend, communicate the circumstance to a friendly party in No. 2, who also having gone down and drawn blank, suspect that the still more southerly claim, marked No. 3, and owned by a dilettante party of gentle shepherds, is the one which intersects it. Being sharp, energetic fellows, and seeing that the pastoral diggers, by no excess of human exertion, could possibly sink ninety feet while they are doing less than one-third of the distance on easier terms, they commence their subterranean excavations, taking up the stuff as if it were from their own drive. So soon, however, as the shepherds discover their neighbours cradling rich-washing stuff, they "off coats and to work like good 'uns;" but days before they get down the premises have been cleaned out, and the riflers are at work in a distant gold-field, beyond the reach of all interference. Had they been caught *flagrante delicto*, local authority might have been arbitrarily stretched to enforce restitution; but I never,

in my extended experience, knew of any case where the delinquents were dealt with beyond the limits of the original jurisdiction, nor do I believe that the law, either now or then —most certainly not then—could have sanctioned any such proceeding. The dotted lines from No. 2 to No. 3 show where the shepherds' claim was driven into.

I will now shortly explain the "Exemplar Shaft," which, as shown in the sketch, is intended to represent an horizontal section of the bottom; but, before I explain the illustration, I deem it necessary to describe the construction of the shaft from the surface. In the deep wet holes slabbing is always indispensable, to prevent their falling in and smothering the workmen. Slabbed holes are generally four feet by two feet ten inches, and as they could not be well or securely slabbed downwards from the surface, the digger first sinks nine feet, and slabs upwards, and so continues proceeding in spells of nine feet all the way down. Arrived at the bottom, "A," the digger plants his strong uprights firmly, to answer as door-posts to the drive, and, having secured them well, the slabs covering the space are removed, and a strong lintel, at least four inches thick, is placed overhead, and stoutly fixed; thus the doorway to drive "B," on the north side, is first erected, and a similar one to drive "B," on the south side, subsequently. As the drive is excavated, straight-edged slabs are inserted over the lintel, and placed longitudinally overhead to serve as a shield, being supported at the other end by strong posts called "tailors," and so they are continued in lengths until the extremity of the claim is reached. All the stuff in drive "B" is hoisted to the surface by the simple agency of a windlass and buckets, and should there be any washing dirt met with it is thrown in a heap by itself. The lateral drives "C" are then commenced at the extreme north

and south ends of the claim, and the worthless stuff thrown into the end of drive "B," to save the labour and delay of hoisting; and so the driving is carried on, until the claim is completely riddled, perforated, and honeycombed. In some cases the sides of the drives require slabbing, from the rottenness of the ground, which operation is performed by placing on each side upright slabs, with the top ends inserted inside the horizontal ones, and the lower ends in a groove or gutter cut in the bottom. Thus the digger who uses proper care works in a complete wooden shield; but many of the slovenly class, in their eagerness to clutch their reward, neglect the proper precautions, and numerous fatal accidents have been the consequence.

The arrangement overground is an ordinary windlass, with a barrel sufficiently long to admit of having two buckets rigged on, so that when the shaft attains a good depth one is going down as the other is coming up. About the same time a wind-sail becomes necessary, into which the air is injected by a pair of fanners. The parties work in shifts* of four, so that when they number twelve to a party there are three shifts in the twenty-four hours, each taking eight-hour spells; but where they are confined to eight, as is more generally the case, there are only two shifts of twelve-hour spells, when the labour is truly excessive, admitting of no intermission night or day, save during their hurried dinner-time; after which the men in the shaft remain aboveground, and *vice versâ*. I omitted mentioning in the proper place that when the bottom is reached the stuff is cleared off, and a well, proportioned to the leakage, is sunk in the rock, to keep the floor of the drives drained. This well is completely

* "Shift" is the synonyme for the "watch" of the sailor, the "guard" of the soldier, or the "gang" of the navvy.

emptied out just previous to the dinner spell, and contains the leakage of that period without overflow. There were a few cases of suffocation from foul air during my visit; but although the air or damp extinguishes life, unlike that in the coal mines it is not sufficiently impregnated with hydrogen to light or explode. Its presence is first indicated by a languor in the candle-flame, then a difficulty of respiration; but as it increases, the candle is only saved from extinguishment by being held—strange as it may seem—in nearly an inverted position, when the circumambient air commences spitting, almost like damp powder, and the lungs are affected precisely as they would be after a long and sharp race.

I went down a few circular dry shafts in Prince Regent's Gully by way of apprenticeship, and I worked myself on my back into some of those low drives which don't require shielding, and would not admit of being worked in any other position, as they could not with safety be made of larger dimensions. Yet, lying on his back, frequently in drain-water, during his spell, with only space enough to work a small pick in a very cramped manner, the digger will not only work to the boundary of his own claim, but into his neighbour's territory, if word comes down from above that the "dart"* is payable. In a weak moment I assented to go feet foremost into one of these man-holes, and having agreed on making the essay, I worked myself along in the dark by means of my hands with a sort of blind determination, occasionally in moments of exhaustion taking in mouthfuls of dirt instead of pure air, and continually breathing earnest prayers for the proximity of the terminus. When at length I found my heels were denied any further entrance, I opened my eyes with the same caution I would in a hail-

* Dart is the designation of stuff worth washing, as contradistinguished from that considered useless.

shower, but, nevertheless, some sharp gravel that had been watching its opportunity effected an entrance; the winking glance, however, sufficed to satisfy me that I was in utter darkness. I listened a moment for sounds, but the throbbing of my heart was the only sound audible; and then, after a short pause, I made a convulsive effort to turn over, which well-nigh ended in my burial, from the quantity of stuff it brought down upon me. I now really began to think my time was come, as I felt a choking, smothering sensation, with a sense of fulness in the head. Had I become desperate I should have been lost, but my resignation saved me, so I made now a calm effort, in imitation—if I could liken it to anything—of a man pinioned and spancelled endeavouring to swim; and feeling that I progressed somewhat, I repeated the effort cautiously for some time, and then ventured raising my head a little to look for daylight, but not a glimmer could I see. I thought it strange, and felt sadly disappointed, but I resignedly struck out for another swim, resolved to make as many as my strength would allow of before looking again, and flattering myself with the hope that it would burst upon me at an early moment. But after a series of painful struggles, in which my knees, my elbows, and my finger-nails seemed to weep blood or perspiration, I took another nervous peep—alas! into Cimmerian gloom—and now, indeed, despair began to supervene. I endeavoured to reflect, but reflection brought no comfort; on the contrary, comparing the time of my entrance with that occupied in my attempts at escape, I was led to think that I had missed my way by getting unconsciously into another drive, leading God knows where; but while revolving this melancholy apprehension in my now sinking mind, I thought—the dream, of course, preceding dissolution—I heard the sounds of muffled laughter, and before I could discriminate whether it arose

from the distant rejoicing of angels at the advent of a kindred spirit, or the fiendish glee of my evil genius at finding me *in extremis*, a temporary barrier was suddenly removed, and I found myself close by the mouth of the drive, and my companions bursting with merriment at their joke. I suppose I made a laughable attempt at joining in the glee, for they opened out into a perfect roar as I fairly emerged and confronted them. But although I by no means relished it, I pretended with all my might to enjoy the fun. When I attained the surface I procured some water to wash in, for my head, face, beard, and hands were coated with clauber,* made up of dirt and perspiration; and after performing my ablutions, one of my friends shouted out, "Look here, mates! look here, I say!" and there, sure enough, in the bottom of the bucket was a good half-ounce of fine gold, which all swore was washed out of my hair, but which I had my strong suspicions was slily slipped in while I was engaged in the operation of scrubbing. In this instance, however, I had the enjoyable end of the joke, for they would have it that the gold came out of my hair, and that it should go into my match-box. But I would warn my unsophisticated readers, notwithstanding my good fortune, not to be prone to enter drives in the present or on a future day, for the digger of 1853 is no longer in existence, neither has he left any heirs or imitators, nor are his traditions regarded as exemplars, for I really believe if an explorer became possessed of an auriferous head of hair now-a-days, under circumstances parallel to mine, that the digger would shave him to the scalp lest any washing dirt might link about the roots, and then not present him with a grain big enough to balance on the point of a cambric needle. This may appear a sort of sweeping im-

* Clauber is a sort of consistent paste made of mud and moisture, unknown to Johnson.

putation on the character of the digger of 1857, but I do not intend it as such by any manner of means, nor as any imputation whatsoever. I rather intend, on the contrary, while attempting an illustrative contrast, to pay a compliment to the present race. There is no class of men in existence who earn their money harder or deserve it better, and I am delighted to think they have improved in prudence and common sense, and are above the weakness or false delicacy of letting a chance visitor—who does not roam about conferring favours—walk away with two guineas' worth of gold-dust in his whiskers. The shopkeeper who would be too timid to inform a customer that he was unconsciously carrying off a remnant of Brussels lace on his button, would not be well calculated to stem the torrent of competition which now reigns throughout the world.

My next essay was in some deep wet holes in the heart of the gully, where the sinking was close upon one hundred feet. One of these in particular was as closely and artistically slabbed as time and tools could make it, but my admiration was, if possible, increased on finding that there was not an individual tradesman of the party. They were all of the better class, who commenced their digging career with the awkwardness natural in cases of the sort, but continued improving until their shafts became models for imitation. But they had been uniformly unfortunate, never having struck a lead in all their sinkings. They had exhausted their capital, but their character for industry was such they got credit freely for all the necessaries of life, the ready money necessary for such outgoings as pick and crowbar pointing, and all other kind of smith work, being found by two professional men of the party, one a doctor and the other a lawyer, both of whom, on occasion, resorted to their professions. In the shaft I went down their usual luck

attended them, for although they had all but exhausted all their drives, they had not, to use a current phrase, "raised the colour."

Close by this shaft was one of a friendly acquaintance, Mr. M'C——n, about the same depth, put down in a rough-and-ready way, but paying admirably. I could easily perceive the gold in the dirt as it came up in the buckets, and after I went down I saw a small heap at the drive mouth, which, to use the favourite simile, was studded with gold like a plum-pudding with currants. I could have picked out a pound weight in a short time with my fingers, for the gold was large and nuggety, and during my stay I saw a small shovelful taken out of the drive, in which the precious metal preponderated over the dirt. In this shaft, too, I had an excellent opportunity of witnessing a most extraordinary, and, to my mind, unaccountable phenomenon—a sort of surging increase of water from the lower drifts, as if the drainage had been intercepted, and the flow backed up. At first it was moderate, scarcely perceptible, but it quickly augmented, causing the men to knock off, as all efforts to stem or overmaster it by baling were fruitless. I made searching inquiries about it, and all the information I could collect on the subject concurred in confirming the general prevalence of this strange diurnal visitation in all the deep sinkings of the gold-field. It recurs daily, but not at stated times, making its ebb and flow felt simultaneously in the entire district as if subject to lunar influences. When it was first discovered, the tidal movements of the ocean were supposed to influence it to some extent, but the elevation of the district above the level of the sea at once demonstrates the absurdity of the conjecture, and even were it possible that the ocean could affect the rise and fall of the water, it should necessarily occur twice in the twenty-four hours.

The explanation of the phenomenon must, therefore, be sought for amongst some other of the agencies of nature. I have never heard it accounted for in a sound or feasible manner, nor am I disposed to offer a surmise of my own on the subject; but it is one which is well calculated to challenge close and curious inquiry.

I was afterwards pointed out a hole which proved the scene of a melancholy tragedy. It was respected as sacred ground, and although the claim had only been bottomed, and never driven, situated as well in a likely neighbourhood, no one seemed to peer down it with a lustful or avaricious eye. On Sundays and holidays many people visited it, but there was an air of mournful silent respect in their manner, as if they conversed in sighs over the ashes in a hallowed tomb. The curse of the reckless digger was hushed within the precincts of the place, and the finger of the thief never dared to touch the various implements strewed about the grim windlass which marked the scene of the unfortunate digger's fate. The party to which it belonged came out from home together, schoolfellows, brother collegians, all of them with gentle blood in their veins. They had a moderate joint-stock capital at landing in the country, which they carried direct to the diggings to escape the allurements of city life. They were remarked, wherever they went to work, as most temperate and industrious in their habits, acquiring esteem and popularity from their kind and obliging dispositions. But they were not favourites of fortune; they always came down on a barren bottom, and their neighbours at length came to remark on their ill-luck, and sympathise in their adversity. Their capital, under the strictest economy, quickly dwindled away, but they were too proud to admit their poverty or ask for credit, so when their money failed they disposed of their little trinkets and jewellery to lucky

diggers in order to procure the meanest necessaries, never in their sorest trials evincing the slightest gloom or impatience. Even when the last locket, emptied of its sacred contents, was transferred to the rugged bosom of an unwashed purchaser, to enable them to carry out their last experiment, they went to work with all their habitual cheerfulness and serenity; and many a fervent wish, akin to a prayer, was entertained by their acquaintances that they would at last meet their reward. On, on they worked, down, down they went, with a steady rapidity as if assured of success; and one day, as the evening hour was approaching, a cry, a tone of exultation, came up from the bottom of the shaft. "Haul up, my boys—haul away; the time is come at last!" and his mates did haul away with gladsome hearts, hauling the more heartily from the great weight coming up. But alas! alas! when it came to the surface, instead of a bucket of gold it was the dead body of their dear companion. He had struck the barren bottom during his spell below, and detaching the bucket, he fixed a noose round his neck, and called upon his dearest friends to strangle him. Never was there so large or sorrowing a funeral on the diggings; and ere the next sun arose, the remainder of the party had departed, no one at the time knew whither. Had they remained, and could they have been prevailed upon to accept it, a thousand pounds in gold-dust would have been collected in an hour to start them afresh, for their troops of friends did not harbour a single ill-wisher. I abstain from giving the initials lest I should recal unpleasant memories in the breasts of their relatives, but I have reason to believe some of the same party are still in the colony in the Government employ, preserving the same estimable character for which they were collectively remarkable.

I went down several other deep wet holes, which would

almost lure an anchorite from his solitary cell, or entice a fat bishop from his rich living in expectation of increasing his bank balance. I also had fresh proofs of the water phenomena without any approximation to its creating cause, but I was immovable in my persistent determination to eschew drive-exploring, save in those where I could move along by the ordinary means of locomotion. At length I came to the celebrated shafts christened "The Jewellers' Shops," from their surpassing richness, sunk at the junction of the Canadian and Prince Regent's leads, where both become concentrated in a common gutter. The line ran at the foot of the gullies, and was correspondingly wet and difficult of working.

I made my first descent in what was called "The Blacksmith's Claim," from being opened by a person of that craft. It was about the most slovenly, ill-sunk shaft I ever ventured down, being so far from the perpendicular that at times the half of the orifice above was obscured, and it was slabbed in so insecure a manner that flakes of stuff were being constantly forced through the wide slits, falling down, to the imminent danger of the people below. This danger was fearfully aggravated by the partial tipping over of the buckets while ascending, from their contact with the irregular sides of the shaft, at times upsetting half their contents; but the irregularities proved both the bane and the antidote, for a heavy pebble, or flake of stuff, which in a perpendicular descent of ninety feet would cause certain death, was rendered comparatively harmless by having its fall frequently broken. The blacksmith's party was composed of eight persons, most of them novices in the new profession, which accounts for the faulty construction of the shaft. When they reached the gutter on the bottom, being ignorant of the proper mode of carrying on the workings, they washed out all the stuff they could reach without opening a regular drive, and after

dividing 1600*l.* per man (12,800*l.*), they offered it for sale. Several parties of inspection went down without making a bid, being frightened at the appearance of the shaft, as well as at the wetness and rottenness of the ground below. At length one party plucked up courage, purchasing all right and title to the claim and utensils for 77*l.* They entered into possession at noon, ten in number, and at quitting time the same day (Saturday) divided 200*l.* per man (2000*l.*). Charmed with their luck, they continued working in spells night and day until the following Monday, when they declared another dividend of 800*l.* per man (8000*l.*—10,000*l.* in all), when they sold out to go on the spree for a week, then to regain possession.

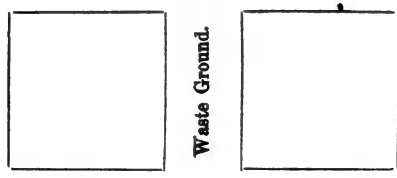
The succeeding party, whose purchase-money I could not ascertain, were regular-bred miners, who went about their business with their eyes open, and their wits at full cock. They spent the first four days of their term in opening two regular drives, one at the point where the gutter entered the shaft, the other where it made its exit. It was during their occupation that I descended, but if I were offered 10,000*l.* for twenty-four hours' work at the bottom, I would have politely declined the employment, for what from the falling dirt plashing in the water around me, the cracking and straining of the bent slabs, and the thin line of light to be discovered at the top, I thought I was certain to defraud the undertaker; and when I came above ground I felt like a person who was released from a coffin which had been prematurely nailed down. Not so, however, the temporary proprietors, who, before the remaining three days had elapsed, took out an amount of gold which divided 1200*l.* per man to a party of twelve men (14,400*l.*). The other party then re-entered, and after digging out 900*l.* per man (9000*l.*) in a week, principally by day-work, they sold out to the well-known

storekeeper Mr. N—r—n for 100*l.*, who put in a gang of men to work it in shares. After a fortnight's irregular work they divided 500*l.* per man (5000*l.*), when one of them, an old hand, undermined the props on a Saturday night, and before Monday morning the whole workings fell in. This fellow then marked out a claim on the surface of the ruin, and went down straight as an arrow on the old gutter, having engaged a hired party. The first tubful (four bucketfuls) they raised turned out forty pounds' weight of coarse gold, and two others yielding ten pounds each (2880*l.*); after which he took gold amounting in the aggregate to 4000*l.* odd, which fixes "the tottle of the whole," as poor Joe Hume would say, at the prodigious and unprecedented figure of 55,200*l.*, taken out of an area of twenty-four feet square—an amount unequalled in the annals of gold-digging, and which may never be again paralleled.

I went down two other of the "shops," one called the "Dalgleish," the other the "Waldridge Claim," both, I believe, fully equal to the "Blacksmith's;" but although I took memoranda concerning their wonderful yields, and also of all the other claims in that renowned line, I conceive it would be tiresome to set forth details so similar in character to those already described. This much, however, I learned at a subsequent date, that an engine-party got a lease from the local court of five acres, comprising the land in which those claims originally stood, and realised a large fortune from washing up the residue.

After exploring the Canadian and Prince Regent's Gullies, Golden Point, and the contiguous diggings, I visited the Gravel-pits, another renowned lead, and peculiarly remarkable from this anomalous fact, that instead of issuing from any range, or being traceable to any quartz reef, it took its rise on a flat, welling up in a manner somewhat

similar to a spring of water. This is a lead from its unique peculiarity well worthy of the closest scientific examination, for I am deeply impressed with the conviction, if a shaft were sunk down at the spot where the lead makes its first appearance, and followed down *ad imo fundi*, that some curious secrets of nature would be revealed. At the time of my visit to the Gravel-pits I had another prodigious proof of the incalculable richness of the district in a tub of dirt which I saw washed out, yielding fifty-seven pounds of gold (2736*l.*), taken from a piece of waste ground, as it was called, being a narrow strip running between two claims, thus—



leaving scarcely enough of room for the shaft. But this was only the first stuff bucketed up from the gutter, which must have yielded a very large aggregate. Not, however, having been finished during my stay, I am unable to give the amount. The great Red Hill lead is also in this neighbourhood, affording still another instance of the untold auriferous wealth of Ballarat. The sinkings on both are of an average depth of a hundred and forty feet, and at the time of my visit I was shown a claim from which close upon 20,000*l.* was taken. I omitted mentioning that M—d—n's party of twelve in the Gravel-pits divided from one claim 3000*l.* each (36,000*l.*).

The evening of the day on which I finished my inspection in this district of the Ballarat diggings was the one that brought my friends' labours in their claim to a finish, so,

when I returned, I found them all engaged in making preparations for the morrow's flitting. They were great favourites, and as their intention got bruited about, hosts of kind volunteers crowded round our fire after supper-time, each individual demanding to carry some portion of the baggage. As their numbers increased, our fireside circle had to be enlarged, and huge logs were piled on until the fire assumed such a magnitude as to attract the notice of the officials at the camp, who sent down a file of police to inquire the cause; but the moment they were discovered the whirlwind cry of "Joe!" arose, and they were soon in the middle of a jeering crowd, who fortunately, this time, were in no bad humour.

An untravelled denizen of this upper world would conclude that, according to the narrow, conventional, exclusive usages of society in this hemisphere, my friends were the real hosts of the evening, and that all the refreshments came from their stock; but no such thing. The visitors were the entertainers, and such was the strife of competitive hospitality, that drink was handed about in buckets, and I saw "one big shout" of aërated stuff called champagne disgorged into a puddling-tub, so that we came next door to the Roman fashion of mixing up gold-dust instead of precious stones in our potations. We had a jolly evening, enlivened by anecdote and adventure as well as song; and although the greater proportion of the melodies were of a coarse and broadly comic character, there were some exquisite morceaux rendered with a sweetness of voice and a refinement of taste that would have extracted charmed plaudits from the most critical circle, proving that the rough spattered shirt of the digger is often worn by men of cultivated minds and polite attainments. I never in all my life heard the plaintive ballad of "Oft in the stilly night" warbled in such

exquisite strains, as if every remembrance suggested in the sweet song arose in the singer's memory and affected his sensibility; nor was I ever more agreeably astonished than in listening to a duet from "La Sonnambula" issuing in a cataract of melody from a pair of hirsute fastnesses, which, like great tropical jungles, seemed impervious either to ingress or egress from the tangled mass of animal vegetation they presented. The effect, too, was most pleasingly heightened by an admirable player on the cornet-à-pistons who appeared to be enjoying himself at a distance, contributing from afar his rich candied harmony, "mellowed" into thrilling nervousness as it "swept" over the "water"-holes in its transit. In plain, unexaggerated truth, the tout-ensemble was fine—I am even warranted in using the term glorious. The sloping sides of the gully and the distant flats lit up with their thousands of open-air fires, round which the dark groups were sharply defined by the bright glare of flame from the roaring logs, presented a scene of gipsy life never approached in the greatest aggregations of that nomadic tribe. The canine contingent, too, did their duty in seasoning the romance of the evening, sometimes in mournful solos, and ever and anon in concerted howls, which commanded breathless attention from their overpowering fulness. But the only bane, the sole drawback to the thorough enjoyment of the original symposiac, was the entrée of that being without whom the world would be no better than a howling wilderness, yet who sometimes mars the heaven she makes by deeds that would coruscate with infamy in the deepest darkness. Two women, celebrated even amongst the most degraded of their class, intruded themselves without any invitation, like a pair of harpies to pick up prey, one called the Princess, the other Mary Anne. Fortunately it was late when they came, for, had

it been earlier, the company would have been dispersed ere it could be said to have met, from the disgusting demeanour, the frightful blasphemy, and the revolting obscenity of these incarnations of fiendism. I shall not attempt any description of them, further than that they quickly broke up the party, but not without securing a brace of unfortunate victims, incapacitated from excess.

I will finish this chapter at right angles with its previous contents, by stating that the extreme baldness of the ranges about Ballarat is to be accounted for, first, by the quantity of timber required for slabbing, and, again, from the disgraceful waste in open-air fires. In its earlier days, before chimneys were attached to the tents, whole trees were felled and ignited, if only to fry some chops or boil a pot of tea, and, as a necessary consequence, the adjacent country became completely denuded. Latterly, however, American stoves have come into use, and economy has become inevitable, as the firewood must be chopped small to be rendered fit for use, and a stove, once heated, keeps the tent at a warm temperature even in winter evenings.

CHAPTER XV.

Little Bendigo—The Women there—Juvenile Fossickers—Adventure with them—The Eureka—Kangaroo Hunt over Digging-holes—Supper Fare in Mr. B——r's Store—Dialogues between the Customers—Tea *versus* Coffee—Two Prospecters from Mount Korong—Their Account of the Locality—The Field for Monster Nuggets—Try the Tailings—Describe Puddling and Cradling—Demonstrate the Necessity of using Quicksilver and Circular-bottomed Cradles—Sporting Excursion—The different Sorts of Game—A real Kangaroo Hunt—Their Saltatory Powers—Uses of their Tail—The Echoes of Victoria—A Scene of Sylvan Laughter—Docility of Victorian Birds and Animals—Robbery—Creswick's Creek—The Style of Living in that Field—Double Uses of Double Guns—Sound your Accordions—Return to Ballarat—Scene on Bakery Hill—Public Meeting—Studied Oratory not popular amongst Diggers—The Effect of honest spontaneous Earnestness—Letter from Town—Obliged to return and postpone my Diggings Tour.

As my friends broke the week in their removal, they made it the pretext for knocking off all work till the following one, in order to show me all the contiguous lions. W—l—n started for Melbourne the morning after, and I, accompanied by the remainder of the crowd—save one, left as a *locum tenens*—started on a tour of inspection. We first visited Little Bendigo, so called from its richness, not in great leads, but in the wide-spread number of nice little gutters emanating from diminutive quartz reefs in the locality. The sinking was of a moderate depth, and not difficult, and although no overtopping piles were secured there, a great number of decent fortunes were accumulated. It had quite a deserted, abandoned appearance at that time, showing

scarcely one windlass to three hundred holes, but it was the head-quarters of the fossickers, who might be mistaken for real diggers, from the swaggering airs they assumed when spending their money. There, for the first time, I saw fossickers of the female sex at work, and these, too, of the diminutive degree both as to age and size; and here I must do the women the justice of remarking that their industry was accompanied with a decency of garb and demeanour which elicited respect, and went to prove that becoming employment engenders respectability of feeling and healthy appetites, as contradistinguished from the depravity and demoralisation which we have the Divine warrant for asserting has its source in idleness, and its type in the class mentioned in the previous chapter. I was much amused in overlooking the precocious operation of a party of Lilliputian fossickers, who worked with all the sang-froid of full, legal maturity, though the two eldest had scarcely reached their teens. Every one of the lot had his full-grown match-box, and every one that I looked into had its store of gold. I ventured on a little joke, by demanding their licenses with as gruff a look as I could assume, but the juveniles were nowise disconcerted; so far from it, indeed, that one of the little urchins screamed out "Joe!" in an ear-piercing octave, which attracted a neighbouring bevy of juveniles, who echoed the cry in the sharpest of tones. When I undeceived them, they seemed half inclined to resent it as an insult on their puny dignity, and one of the leaders gave me the gratuitous advice "not to try on no more of my games if I wanted to keep my skin whole," which I acknowledged with a Gulliver-like obeisance, and moved on. It might have been an illusion, but for a considerable distance I thought I saw and heard heavy pebbles falling like hailstones in the water-holes near me. I could not, however, see any cloud in the sky, and

my sharpest turn could not catch sight of a little fossicker in an upright position, but the shower continued until I crossed the gully.

The few stores that remained in Little Bendigo were altogether supported by the fossickers, who relished the good things procurable with as keen a zest as their betters. I called into one, Messrs. T——y and W—l—rs's, to obtain some refreshments, and found it quite as well assorted and furnished as any in Ballarat proper. I was highly edified while there at the conduct of three under-sized fossicking coons, who discussed the nature of "their shout" with the gravity of veteran topers, though the victim* had to rise on his toes before he could bring his mouth on a level with the counter to announce it; and when the glasses with the liquor were shoved to the edge not a head could be seen from behind as the tiny brown hands clasped them.

From Little Bendigo we descended the low range to the Eureka, a locality standing in the front rank of second-class celebrity as a digging, and foremost of all in historical fame as the site of the rebel stockade, which secured its aim while it succumbed to the sovereign authority. These diggings are intersected by the rivulet Yarrowee, and are fed with gold from the Little Bendigo source above it. Like their auriferous parent, they were first famed for the number of its little gutters, which, however, were soon found to converge to a focus, and at length were discovered to have united in one great whole, known as "the great Eureka lead," which furnished forth many large fortunes. The depth of the sinking varied very much, ranging from forty-five feet to one hundred and seventy feet, and at the time of my visit I could not see an idle windlass, as the flat was studded with a dense

* Victim in shouting is the person left in in hiding the horse for a round of drink.

population of at least eight thousand souls. While watching the washing out of some very rich stuff, my attention was arrested by a distant uproar, at first mistaken for a "license hunt," but the absence of "Joe!" soon proved it was a commotion of another kind. Every hole was soon vacated, every dog let loose, and such a helter-skelter, pell-mell, heterogeneous hunt ensued as I never saw the like of. I ran as well as my neighbours, and as the chase was coming at right angles to my line, I soon saw it was a large old man* kangaroo, the first I ever caught sight of in a wild state. Considering the broken nature of the ground, the speed it attained was very great, and some of its springs were beyond any limit I had ever previously formed of muscular projection. I do not believe, under any circumstances, it would have escaped the mixed and multitudinous pack by which it was pursued, but on even ground the chase would have been a long and exciting one. As it was, there was no fair play; not only was it followed by a mongrel posse of dogs and men from behind, but its path was gradually narrowed by lateral enemies, while even in front fresh foes were awaiting its advance, big dogs jumping at its throat, and big men aiming shovel strokes at its head. At last the poor animal, in a misjudged jump, landed in a water-hole, from which it could not leap, and in this helpless state the harmless, meek-looking brute had its brains mercilessly beat out by compassionless men. It was curiosity, not pleasure, that caused me to join in the pursuit, but the disgust with which I witnessed the closing scene derived a degree of gratification from seeing a lot of the savage, unsightly dogs maimed and wounded by blows intended for the poor kangaroo.

My friends and I had quarters for the night by invitation

* Old man kangaroo is the patriarch of his flock, who, having escaped hurt for years, attains a great size.

from Mr. B——r, who managed a branch store there for his firm, Messrs. B——r and D——y. His domicile behind the scenes was by far the most comfortable I had yet seen in the diggings, and his hospitality was warm and genuine. We had a plentiful and most excellent supper, with the beef and mutton of Victoria, the bread of South Australia, the butter of ould Erin, the coffee of Ceylon, the sugar of Mauritius, the tea of China, while the ham of York, the marmalade of Scotland, the sardine of France, the condiments of India, were only waiting for a beckon to jump down our throats from the surrounding shelves. I said nothing of milk, "'cause why," we had none, but we managed to find a substitute in that sweet cream of the valley which never turns sour from keeping, but gathers fresh attractions and more ardent admirers as it ripens in years. We were within earshot, behind the screen, of many amusing dialogues between the various customers who came to buy tobacco or wet their whistles. Ladies, too, who came short distances to do their evening shopping, were not above "taking a dram" from the gallant swains present. One in particular even went the length of reciprocating the compliment, but I found it was an emanation of policy, as she kept a refreshment, or board-and-lodging tent, and was anxious to propitiate custom. A countryman of her own, not to be outdone in hospitality, proposed "The health of Molly Connor" with all the honours, appending the suggestion that it would be all the better "if there was a little more stringth in her tay, but not quite so much in her butther." Molly acknowledged the "civility" in becoming terms, after wiping the corners of her mouth with an apron resembling Jeremy Diddler's kerchief, but in reference to the insinuation of Dennis Brady, she remarked, "She was noways behoulden to him or his, for the divil's mother wouldn't plaze him. Tay nor coffee was no

good if the spoon didn't stand up in the middle of the cup, though the drop he got onct a year in Mayo was too weak to run out o' the spout."

I remarked before the great difference of taste and habit between the Californian and Victorian digger in the consumption of tea and coffee. The former rarely ever used tea, while coffee is only used in the same exceptional way by the latter. I cannot account for the fact otherwise than by referring it to the greater ease and readiness with which tea is prepared, unless it be that it is more palatable when cool than coffee. As to their relative nutritious or sustentive properties, I know by stern experience that coffee is infinitely preferable. Often in crossing the prairie to the Rocky Mountains, when, after a day's toilsome journey, the men were scarcely able to take the harness off the animals, a cup of fresh-ground fragrant coffee would set them up again in strength and spirit, while I found that tea, on the few occasions we were necessitated to use it, did not produce any such desirable effects. The Californian digger had to roast, grind, and boil his own coffee, but the Victorian, who is so surrounded with women, would be saved all that bother; so that I hope his preference, after all, is rather to be attributed to taste than placed to the account of laziness.

During the evening two respectable and highly intelligent men, who had returned from a northern prospecting tour, came in, and being friends of Mr. B—l—rs, he took them into the sanctum, where I had a long and instructive chat with them. They had been to Mount Korong, Gower, and M'Intyre's diggings, as they were called, all to the north of the discovered gold parallel, and very promising in some respects, though not over-crowded, from this distinguishing peculiarity that their gold did not run in leads or gutters, nor was it diffused through the soil, being

altogether restricted to widely-scattered but rich packets of coarse gold and immense nuggets of pure metal; so that a lucky few got suddenly enriched, while the *oi polloi* could not clear expenses, which in that quarter were enormously augmented by the remoteness of the district and the impracticability of the roads. As a general remark, it holds good in the Victorian gold-fields, that the great nuggety fields are not payable to the multitude, the gold in those regions being extremely patchy. Thus parties, favoured by chance, who happen to hit upon 1000*l*., 3000*l*., or 8000*l*. nuggets, can afford to pick and delve on for months and months until they come to another solitary chunk, "all alone in its glory," while the poor fellows who come with a rolled blanket over their shoulders, containing their entire necessaries, are soon obliged to retreat to the more moderately but more uniformly endowed fields, where a livelihood can be secured, though a sudden fortune may not be attainable. The returned prospecters carried down with them several splendid nuggets, the finest of which were got under the following extraordinary circumstances. An overland party from Adelaide to Bendigo got so far as the neighbourhood of Mount Korong, but as it was a family caravan, heavily laden, they were unable to proceed from the wet and rotten state of the ground without stopping to recruit. They occupied their idle time in profitless prospecting, until one day, when roaming in search of their truant bullocks, they came upon a conical, sparsely-wooded hill in the neighbourhood of the mount, the surface of which was literally strewed with big nuggets. It is supposed they were occupied some days in gathering their golden harvest, but the secret came out in a drinking jollification, and a rush of all the men, women, and children in the neighbourhood (not over two hundred and fifty, all told), including the two

narrators, hurried to this locality, only a few miles distant, where they quickly cleared off the auriferous nuggets and pebbles, some absolutely picking up as many as they could comfortably carry, and one small child was seen toddling back with a 15 lb. chunk in his arms. The men in question got seventeen pieces in all, one as large as 3¾ lb., the smallest over 9 oz., and all the others about equally intermediate. From this most extraordinary surface indication the small settlement moved bodily to the immediate neighbourhood, in the full conviction of digging out individual fortunes before the news would spread downwards; but what was, if possible, still more extraordinary than the richness of the surface, there was not a speck to be found below. Holes were sunk in every nook and corner, and to every depth, but all with the like result—*nulla bona* was the return. The Adelaide party, however, seemed perfectly contented with what they got; for, instead of prosecuting their journey to Bendigo, they returned home, never, of course, admitting the full extent of their gains, lest it might excite the cupidity of evil-disposed people. One of our informants, however, was favoured with a sight of a nugget which he said was certainly between 70 lb. and 100 lb. weight. Even up to the present day these diggings are only scantily peopled, although scarce a month passes that some monster nugget does not come down from thence, the last and biggest ever seen in the world,* 1743 oz., having been brought to light in the latter end of last year.

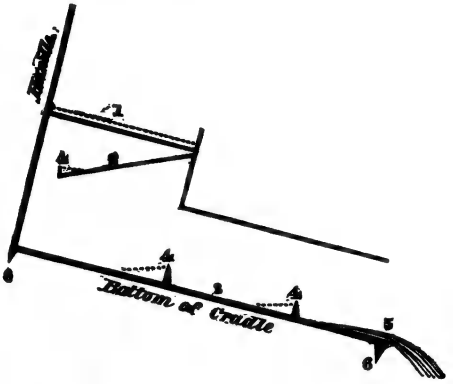
It was arranged, before retiring for the night, that the next day was to be devoted to a sporting excursion in the Warrenheep neighbourhood, some five or six miles distant—

* This nugget of solid gold, two feet four inches in length by ten inches at its widest part, weighs, within a few pennyweights, 150 lb.; 7000*l.* was offered for it. It was found alone on a bed of sand at thirteen feet sinking.

a squatter station, in a rich, well-watered, undulating country. I was promised some genuine kangaroo hunting, kangaroo rat-coursing, wild-cat worrying, black swan rifle practice, and any quantity of wild-duck shooting, together with an undertaking, if we consented to camp out, of a sufficiency of opossum shooting. The following morning, while breakfast was preparing, and a basket of prog in the course of packing, I took a dish to experiment on the Eureka tailings, and I found them even more auriferous than those already subjected to trial. I showed the residuum at the bottom of my basin reproachfully to the party to whom they belonged, but their reply was a contemptuous laugh, as much as to say, "Broken meat for the poor," "Dirty butter for servants." I sat watching their puddling and cradling operations until I was cooey'd* for from the store to start, and in the course of my observations could clearly see that the escape of gold was caused by a combination of ignorance and negligence in the cradling process; for in tub puddling in the most awkward management there is not the same opportunity for loss. It is managed thus: about four buckets of washing dirt are thrown into a tub about the size of an ordinary washing-tub, some water is then thrown in, and the whole is worked, first into mortar, then into puddle, by tossing, and turning, and twisting it with a shovel, the gold of course subsiding to the bottom as the amalgam gets into a state of liquidity. After working it awhile in this fashion the top puddle is drained off, carrying away a considerable portion of valueless mud; another water is then added, and the same operation repeated, and then a third, after which the stuff at the bottom of the tub is washed in dishfuls through the cradle, of which I will give a rude section to facilitate my explanation.

* Cooey is a peculiar Australian call, shouted in shrill falsetto, as it is pronounced. It is wonderfully penetrating.

A man sits or stands at the cradle with a tub of water beside him, holding the handle of the cradle in one hand and a ladle for dipping water in the other.



Another man stands at the tub, throwing on an occasional shovelful from it on No. 3 (a perforated iron sheet), his comrade rocking all the time, and pouring on water, which carries the stuff on the apron No. 2, at the end of which there is a bar No. 4, about two inches high, intended to intercept some of the gold, which, from its greater gravity, runs down close on the apron, the remainder falling over on No. 3, the bottom of the cradle, on which there are two other bars, marked "4," also intended to intercept the gold, and all the stuff that gets over the last or lower bar goes off in the tailings No. 5, the pivots or rim on which the cradle is rocked being represented by the marks Nos. 6. The principle of the cradle is good and simple, but all depends on the angle at which it is worked, and in keeping the bars clean from obstruction. If it is worked at such a slant as is represented above, the water will run at such a rapid rate as to carry away most of the fine gold, and if the bars are not everlastingly looked after, the black and fine sand forms a hard cake,

as shown by the dotted lines from the points at Nos. 4, which renders the operation of the bars completely worthless, as all obstruction is obliterated and the gold runs off with the dirt. These were the causes of the richness of the tailings at the time of my first visit to Ballarat; and although much greater care is observed at the present day, the loss from faulty cradling is still excessive, but not appreciated. Unless the bars, as I said, are kept clean, they are good for nothing, and no human attention, nor I think ingenuity, can keep them in a constant state of cleanliness and freedom without the agency of quicksilver. If each bar is filled two-thirds high with quicksilver it will roll from side to side in the rocking, and not only effectually prevent the settlement of fine black sand, but catch all the fine gold with which it would come in contact; but in order to have it work well, I am of opinion that the bottom of the cradle should be circular instead of flat, and the bars made to follow the curve up the sides as high as the water would surge. Cradles made in this way never have heaps accumulating at the side, as in the flat-bottomed fashion. I used the circular ones in California with great success, even in the absence of quicksilver, which was not obtainable at the early period of my visit; and, curious enough, though most reflecting men admit its superiority, I am safe in saying there is not a single one in use in all the diggings of Victoria.

This cradle digression is a long one, but I will not offer any apology, as I know that the reader will be more interested in seeking a thorough understanding of the process of gold-washing than in following my description of the field-sports which follow. We mustered a party of seven, all armed, attended by a sutler, some fine kangaroo dogs and sharp terriers, passing from the time of our start through a magnificent country, rich in soil and fine timber, gently undulating and excellently watered. The day was glorious, and

the very air enjoyable. We commenced our sport—don't smile—by smoking out some of those prettily-spotted wild cats which overabound in the Australian bush, generally nestling and breeding in the hollow hearts of decayed trees, and then we had a number of short but sharp courses after the kangaroo rat, which always seemed to break also from decayed timber, running with a velocity perfectly astonishing for so small an animal.* We beat closely about in some favourite haunts throughout the morning without being able to sight a kangaroo, and then we took a spell at swan and wild-duck shooting on a very large lake, or sheet of water, along the margin of which we had to wade in reeds and water, sometimes hip deep, to steal on the game, which were provokingly shy, and while engaged in this branch of the amusement, I saw numbers of snakes—all of which are deadly—gliding through the rushes, and every other second I was obliged to sever the attachments of affectionate leeches, which seemed to have selected me—as it is said mosquitoes do also—for my fresh blood, for none of my companions complained of the plague. The next act of the drama was not the least agreeable; opening the basket, and testing the bouquet of Martel's beverage, then carefully unfolding the wrappings of a tongue, as if it were a priceless mummy, or ripping open sardine or lobster tins, the staff of life being broken in the primitive style, with which all good Christians are familiar. Who would have thought, thirty years ago, that Martel's brandy would commingle with the volcanic filterings of Warrenheep, or that the sprats of the Loire would be masticated one hundred miles up in the wild bush of Victoria, all paid for in coin from nature's own mint in the immediate neighbourhood.

* The kangaroo rat is about the size of a small rabbit, and is said to jump like the kangaroo, though to my apprehension it ran.

After dinner we went away straight on end for a few miles to a place where our leader staked his reputation on a find, and, to do him justice, the accuracy of his intelligence was quickly ratified, for we sprang five kangaroos in a cluster. I ran, as directed, to a point near which they were heading, and some time before I could see them I heard the quick thump, thump, thump, following their bounds. One came almost straight towards me, approaching within a jump before he discovered me, when he made a bound on a clear bit of ground, that left me time to take off my hat and scratch my head in admiration before it came to a conclusion. I could have shot, or at all events crippled him, but I left him to the dogs, who were closing him, until he came to a sharp slant, on the side of a sloping ravine, adown which his jumps were too long by half for civilised belief. I never saw or imagined anything like them, nor shall I give the measurements, because I never took them, knowing full well that my veracity would be impugned, and my figures recommended to the marines. I will only, therefore, say to the disappointed sceptics, that they had better come out, in thirty days and upwards, by the *Great Eastern*, to measure kangaroo jumps with their own boxes and tapes. We killed two fine ones, but we contented ourselves with their tails, whose measurements I also refer to the sceptics, from their unbelievable size. It is an opinion maintained stoutly by some, and discredited by many, that the kangaroo is aided in his spring by the muscular power of his immense tail, which, especially near the root, is of great size and strength, and the former suspicion receives some complexion from its worn appearance at the nether end. However, from closely examining the tracks of the kangaroo which crossed the gully on ground where the impression was full and distinct, I incline to think, from the absence of any appearance of co-

operation on the part of that member, that the dorsal appendage is only used for preserving the balance of the animal in that upright posture, which, in a state of quiet, it is so fond of assuming.

The day was well advanced when we turned homewards, and there was more feathered life in the forest than I could have imagined from the descriptions I read of it; but there was neither song, nor chirrup, nor twitter. The proudly-crested cockatoo and the highly-plumaged parrot stood moodily on their perches; the fidgety magpie, as he ducked briskly and pecked his tail, seemed to say, "I would speak if I dare," while the other smaller varieties flitted noiselessly about, as if they were tongue-tied; an odd opossum yawned carefully on waking up for the evening's business, and a cursed snake might be seen "once and away" stealthily peeping from his slimy hole, but otherwise the reign of silence was all-pervading, save when interrupted by our own conversation. At length, in a "visitation of compunctiousness" for our tired-down sutler—nothing else, I assure you—we sat by a brook-side to make an effort at draining the only remaining brandy-bottle in his basket, and as a bit of pastime it was proposed to discharge our guns at hat practice—that is, throwing up our hats in turn to be shot at. I was, from my earliest days, above the average at shooting on the wing, and I made a perfect colander of the one I fired at, to the infinite merriment of the party, who laughed outright as the proprietor picked it up, provoking what appeared to me a most faithful echo. When he in his turn blazed away at mine, his palpable failure gave rise to another shout of laughter, which was echoed as before; and, on my remarking the fine, natural response, there was a general roar from all my companions, and the echoes roared and the trees shook their sides in perfect ecstasies of silent laughter, and when we seemed

about to stop, another led off in a convulsive fit threatening suffocation, until the whole bush seemed one broad guffaw, Echo, to my utter amazement, rather leading than following the gleeful uproar. Little did I imagine that my simplicity was the cause of all this boisterous merriment, or that the echo was no other than the "laughing jackass," whose convivial hour approaches with the twilight, when he enjoys a hearty laugh, I suppose, at the stupidity and slowness of his feathered neighbours. It is really most amusing as well as strange to hear them laugh, it so nearly resembles that of the human being, so natural and so rollicking, comprising every variety of tone, shrill and mellow, the short cachinnation, haw! haw! haw! or the long, tear-compelling fit, hoo! hoo! hoo! oh! o-o-hoo-oo-oo! but nothing of bitter grinning, nothing of the sardonic sample, all real, heart-brewed stuff.

The jackass is a brown-plumaged, owl-looking bird, about the size, too, of an ordinary owl. It is dull and stupid when at rest, but a lively, arch bird, susceptible of any variety of instruction. It can be made to talk well, and whistle, too. It is averse to rats, and I have seen one trained to keep ill-favoured strangers at a distance. In fact, it is a general remark concerning the beasts and birds of Australia, that they are easily domesticated, and most readily comprehend any sort of teaching. I have myself seen parrots, cockatoos, jackasses, and magpies, talking and whistling in a way I never heard birds do before. The magpie, especially, is a bird it would be difficult to match in any other country. When once taught a few words, he very soon, of his own accord, enlarges his vocabulary to a limit admitting almost of conversation, pronouncing, not uttering, his words, and where—which is rarely the case—he is taught in the natural voice, and not in that affected falsetto in which most people

address birds and children, he acquires the natural tone, and speaks accordingly, "saying papa, like a man." In whistling, also, they are exceedingly quick and clever, learn them one tune, and they will soon pick up "by ear" any other tune that a shopman or a constant customer may be in the habit of whistling, rendering it, if properly taught in the first instance, in a full, continuous tone. The emu can be made a perfect pet of, going about the place like a favourite dog, taking bread out of your hand, or off your hat, or from a window. Like the ostrich, they have great digestive powers. I saw one that swallowed hard wood shavings as fast as the carpenter made them, and would peck all the nails and screws he could reach. It is a harmless bird, but although it can be made as familiar as possible, it never seems to form attachment to those who are most kind to it. "The native companion," again, a monstrously exaggerated crane, can be taught as its owner pleases. It goes about stalking in its "seven-leagued strides" amongst the farm-yard fowl, it will follow like a dog when trained, and will spread out its wings and aid its master in driving a flock of fowl or sheep through a gateway. The kangaroo, when taken young, is a most imitative animal, and in fact becomes too much of a pet. A friend of mine, a quartz reefer, Mr. H—m—n, of Bendigo, who kept a lot of large kangaroo dogs, had one that played with the dogs, sat on end at the tent-fire *like a Christian*, with the cat in his arms, watched wistfully during meal-times for an occasional piece, and, if not well watched in turn, would help himself very unceremoniously to any morsel within reach. He had a peculiar penchant for the bed, and if my friend omitted securing the tent-door when going to work, he was sure to find him tightly wrapped up in the blankets when he returned. The kangaroo-rat, also, was capable of learning trickery or sleight-o'-hand. But I

must halt in my enumeration, else I shall never get to the end of my book.

We reached Mr. B—l—r's in good time for supper, and Mr. T—b—e and I arranged to start for Creswick Creek Diggings in the morning, Mr. R—b—n returning to the head-quarters at Dalton's Flat to advise our movements. In the course of the night there was a regular rising in the Eureka, which at first I thought was a political émeute, but it turned out to be a bushranger hunt, a party of those infernal pests having cut into Mr. T——r's store at some distance, managing to carry off the cash-box, but as the night was dark, and the bush quite contiguous, the ruffians escaped.

Early in the morning the rich notes of the wild magpie called us up. Let me here remark that the magpie is almost the only tuneful bird in the Victorian bush, according to my experience, and he, in the natural state, only whistles in the early morning. The distance to Creswick from Ballarat is between twelve and fourteen miles, through a country not peculiarly interesting. Our road lay through a region called the Bald Hills, being naturally free of timber. They may be said to be curious in their generation, not constituting a range in any part, all being isolated from each other like so many distinct gigantic tumuli. Although of considerable elevation, they in no part rise above the good vegetating limit, and being composed of good surface soil, they have been since all cultivated to the summits.

At Creswick's Creek I found a very considerable population, and a much greater breadth of ground turned over than I anticipated; but there were no large finds, the deposit being excessively patchy, and even where pockets were found they never proved of any great dimensions. From a black clay indication, corresponding with that in the rich gullies at

Ballarat, there was a strong prevailing creed that a great lead would be discovered, and a vast amount of money, time, and labour was expended in following a bling gutter called the "Black Lead," which never turned out of much account. There were, in their own phraseology, a good few of the Yankee tribe "sucked in" by that illusion, for at the Eureka and Creswick I first saw my calculating cousins mustering in anything like numbers. The sinking at Creswick on the whole was very hard and difficult, and coupling this with the smallness of the remuneration, as well as its uncertainty, I was rather surprised to find so large a resident digging population at so short a distance from the great field of Ballarat. I believe, however, they were all awaiting some great and sudden development of hidden wealth. Here, again, the cradle error was at full work, and the fossickers in active employment. I remarked, also, a few of foreign extraction—a small party of Chinese —who were moving about unconsciously in a thick atmosphere of curses and denunciations. Mr. Esmond, said to have been the original discoverer of gold in Victoria,* was working at Creswick. Soon after my visit he brought his claim for reward under the notice of the Gold Commission, and got, if I remember right, a compensation of 500*l.*, to which the citizens of Geelong superadded a handsome gold cup. Clunes is only four miles from Creswick, and I would have gone there, but I was informed there was little doing;

* Mr. Campbell was in reality the original discoverer of gold in Victoria, having found it in Forest Creek months, if not a year, before Mr. Esmond. He found it when having some sheep washed in that stream, but he kept the discovery a profound secret, lest the squatting run belonging to his cousin, Mr. Cameron, might be claimed or cut up by the Government. When it became generally known that gold abounded in the colony, he published his secret, and claimed the reward, but it was objected that his conduct in withholding the information disentitled him to claim, and I think justly.

I therefore appropriated the latter part of the day to my usual experiments on the tailings, and with the same result, the returns from them bearing about the same average to the yields of the field as in my trials at Ballarat.

We got mid-day refreshment easily enough, but as evening closed in we made anxious inquiries about a party with whom T—b—e was acquainted, with the view of getting quarters for the night, as there were no hotels there. We wandered about from gully to gully without being able to get any tidings, and we finally concluded to put on a bold face and ask permission of a storekeeper to allow us a night's rest amongst his bales and bags, when my friend T—b—e got a smack between the shoulders from an open palm that made his breath go into the wrong passage, but before he could cough it right he was confronted by a jolly digger, who demanded to know, in a truly affectionate manner, "What the b——y h—ll brought him to Creswick?" A clasping of hands followed, and then an introduction, our new friend being a Mr. H——t, son of an Irish stipendiary magistrate. He was infinitely vexed that there was not sufficient time to prepare a suitable supper, but consoled us by the information that we should not starve, as "there were the remains of a jackass pie on hand, and his mate Tim was a first-chop hand at a spreckled b——r on the coals."* So down we went to the tent, and Tim went to work with an evident determination of excelling himself on the occasion. The night was not so favourable as could be desired, a heavy rain having begun to fall; we therefore cleared our table inside by sweeping the centre of our tent floor, and then set it out by the fragment of jackass-pie (the poor bird, not the animal, mind you), and such few rusty accessories as could

* B——r on the coals is a thinnish cake spreckled with currants, and baked hastily on the glowing embers.

be got together in a hurry. When the chops and b——r were ready, we all squatted round à la Turque, our lights being fixed in the loaded barrels of a double gun, which was tied to the centre pole. A couple of rollicking neighbours joined us soon after the solids had been disposed of, when H——t, addressing Tim, appositely quoted the invalid's appeal to his wife, "Nancy dear, leave off the barley-water and give us a drink," which his mate immediately answered pantomimically by grasping the teapot muzzlewards, and swinging it contemptuously aside to make room for "the real strip-me-down-naked," as he playfully called the brandy-bottle. Believe me, good reader, we made a night of it. There was no escape—no room for finesse, for after every round, to make sure that no heel-taps remained, there was an invariable call from the chair of "Sound your accordions!" which was promptly answered by a jingling of glasses, mouths downwards, on the breast-buttons. And so we went on, until the lights were extinguished by discharging the double gun from the tent door as the small hours began increasing in magnitude.

We all rested where we sat, and next morning, from the uncomfortableness of our beds, we were astir early, and I took leave of my new acquaintances as if our intimacy was the growth of a lifetime. On our road home we made a slight détour to Bakery Hill to get the *Weekly Argus*, as it was Saturday, and we reached that historical locality just in time for a great public meeting convened to afford an opportunity of denouncing all political evils and class grievances, as well as for promulgating their ascertained remedies. There was great stir and bustle amongst the leading agitators, and a portentous preparation of note-books amongst the special newspaper correspondents. The crowd was considerable, but without any pervading sentiment in

opinion, that I could discover, beyond the strictly personal question, "the abolition of the license-tax." I saw that T—b—e was frequently interrogated about "his friend in town-garb" (your humble servant), and as he told them that I was somebody or other, and that my sympathies were with the diggers, I was "rushed" by introductions, invited to take a place on the platform, and finally asked to propose a resolution, which latter compliment I most respectfully declined. At length a bell commenced ringing in front of a large canvas tenement, and all the different groups commingled in one advancing crowd towards the entrance. I found inside an extemporised platform at the end, on to which I was ushered to a prominent place. The proposers occupied a front row, striving to look as if they were not aware of their being about to be asked to take part in the proceedings, while I could clearly see they were in communion with their memories, calling to mind the concluding words in pages so-and-so, and the starting word in the sentences on the other leaves. The seconders were in their proper position, got up without starch for the occasion, all of the "unaccustomed as I am" class. The chairman, Mr. H—ff—y, was voted to his post by acclamation, and Dr. C—rr (who afterwards became insane) "broke open the ball." He had evidently read up for the occasion, but studied harangues. Abstruse political theories and polemical refinements are not the fitting elements for popular oratory; his loftiest flights and his most studied cadences (none of them approaching mediocrity, by-the-way) scarcely produced a fitful "hear." It was evident that the audience paid no attention to the contrasting illustrations between direct or indirect taxation, or the grand theory of "basing representation on population instead of property;" even the reference to "unlocking the lands" elicited a languid meed of appro-

bation; but when a digger from the crowd asked aloud "What about the b——y license-tax?" there arose a simultaneous shout as if from a roaring giant, which broke the doctor's thread. He tried to stagger on, but after a few stumbles he "declined occupying any more of their valuable time," and sat down, to the apparent delight of the whole crowd. The next speaker, and the next, and the next, and the next still, were all of a piece, and the cry of "Shut up!" became impartially applicable to all, until a rough, determined, yet good-countenanced man was lifted up in front. He evidently did not court the prominence, but there was no mistaking it, he was perfectly self-possessed, his mind was full, and his undisciplined tongue "was all there." He looked steadily around with his great hand thrust into the breast of his open shirt, where the mud-spattered hair was as evident as his whiskers. I felt sure I knew what was coming, and his first clearly-pronounced words, "Brother diggers!" made the assurance doubly sure. He bade them be of good heart, but to be *united*—emphasising the word; he advised them to obey the law, but denied the legality of the license-tax, which bore down upon the industry that made the country great, and went on pampering their persecutors. He drew a most graphic picture of the tyranny of officials' enormities of digger-hunting, and wound up by "swearing, while he would die for his Queen," he would shed the last drop of his blood before he would pay another license. The burst of enthusiasm that followed this declaration is altogether indescribable. It seemed to lift the great tent into mid-air, and, inoculated with the glow of feeling around me, I could almost imagine that I had a cloud for a footstool. The speaker was seized, *nolo episcopari* notwithstanding, and carried out in triumph to the open air, leaving the chairman to dissolve the meeting, vote himself thanks, and all the rest of it.

It was then, in truth, the *bonâ fide* meeting commenced, and many a spirit-stirring speech, bearing close upon the one text, was delivered extemporaneously from the head of a barrel or the end of a waggon.

We did not wait for the wind-up, but reached our tent before sun-down. And there I found a letter from my brother, just brought by B—b—n from the post-office, exhorting me to come down direct, as Y——d had brought an action for the loss he sustained by the damaged state of the waterproof clothing he purchased previous to the auction; and, as I was a most important witness, he implored me to postpone my digging tour for the present. I certainly came to the resolution of doing so most reluctantly, as I foresaw what really did happen: the proverbial delays of the law, the probability of getting mixed up in some other speculation while waiting postponement after postponement, and the inevitable procrastination of the task which I had set myself to get through without intermission. I was even obliged to break faith with my friends, and compel them to work the windlass as they best might until W—l—n's return from Melbourne. I arranged to start next day, to reach Watson's the first night, Geelong the next, and Melbourne early on the third day.

CHAPTER XVI.

Down Journey from Ballarat—Whole Country under Water—A Legion of Chinese—Primitive Colloquy—Watson's—My Sleeping Partners—Their former Pursuits—My Escape through the Window—Dangerous Position outside—Comical Mode of collecting the Bed-tax—Reach Geelong—Scenes on the Trip to Melbourne—Crowded State of the Yarra-Yarra and the Wharfs—Monomania of British Exporters—Effects in the Melbourne Markets—Imports from all quarters of the Globe in the Teeth of adverse Advice—Professional Men inoculated with the Trading Mania—The Crowds of Commission Agents—How they carried on the War—Slight Revolution in the Aspect of Melbourne and its People during my Absence—Visit Professor Sands—His Theory about the Prevalence of Fires in Melbourne—His Notions concerning American Bouncing and Filibustering—Rates of Tradesmen's and Labourers' Wages.

I STARTED with the first note of the magpie, and, after a hurried breakfast on the heel of a damper and cold chop, I got under weigh, T—b—e accompanying me as far as Bunningyong. Passing along the foot of Canadian Gully, I met my young Scotch friends coming to work rather in advance of the usual time, being desirous, as they informed me, to work double tides in their first hole—anxious as well to reach the bottom as to limit the expenditure by economising time. After a fashion, the great gold-field resembles the Great Wen in the early morning. Canadian Gully, as we looked up it, was as still as Fleet-street ere the diurnal racket commences, but the first windlass scarcely lifted its arm ere the murmuring hum of fierce toil was heard swelling into its

usual roar, just as the rumble of the first waggon is followed by the daily thunder of the City.

It was the usual breakfast-time when we reached Sellick's public to take our parting nobbler, colonial fashion. I did not make any delay, as I wished to anticipate any down-going party, being resolved on a forced march; for I knew if I started in company I would give offence on leaving them. I therefore set out alone. Very heavy rains had fallen about and below Bunningyong (which is the Greenock of Victoria), submerging the whole lower country, which looked like an inland sea, and were it not for the broken lines of bullock and horses' teams struggling through it, I should really have been unable to select my direction. I walked many miles without even making a perfectly dry step, and was most frequently half-leg deep in water. As well as I could conjecture, about two-thirds of the way from Bunningyong to Watson's, I saw a ridge of rolling, timbered country, which I approached with a feeling akin to that of a tired swimmer nearing the beach, for I felt "kinder-like sitting down." I could see at a distance that there was a crowd of people amongst the trees—a much more comfortable prospect than a dual number—for although we have the assertion, on very high authority, that "in gangs of forty, thieves commit their crimes," it does not hold good in the antipodes, where, more after the custom of "rabbits and hares," or "even the bears," who "in couples agree," the bushrangers, in nine cases out of ten, set about their murders and depredations in pairs, mainly influenced, I should suppose, by the apprehension of pals splitting, as they term it; for the marvellous benefit of co-operation has its exception in secret-keeping. "Never get any one to help you in keeping an important secret," or, at all events, keep the limit of your associates as small as possible.

As I got to dry land a slight effort of imagination would have enabled me to believe that I had waded across an arm of the Indian Ocean and landed in China, for I walked into the midst of a Mongol host, some sitting on their long tails, others paddling about in their canoe-shaped shoes, and all furtively glancing from their almond-shaped eyes. I broke silence in broken English, which most people imagine approximates any language they cannot speak. There was a general Tartar grimace, followed by a suppressed yabber, and one jolly little fellow, whisking his tail with his hand, came forward to carry on a conversation in short nods and eyebrow elevations. After an interchange of compliments in this significant way, I had another try at the hashed English. "Come gode," I said, pretending to scratch the earth, at which they all laughed, and nodded like the wound-up mandarins in the Lowther Arcade; for if there is one word which, more than another, is known all the world over, and can make itself understood from Kamtschatka to Cape Horn, from Greenwich Observatory to the 180th degree of longitude, and round again, without an interpreter, that word is gold, pronounce it gode, or by any other analogous sound. "Come gode" was my happiest effort, and "Va good" the purest Mongolian Saxon on the other side; and after ringing the changes on these four words for over an hour, they rigged their fore and aft poles, and proceeded through the water under loads that would make a mule stagger, and I continued at a smart double-quick on the other trail.

I had quite enough of it when I reached Watson's, and as I sat down by the creek to wash my feet, and put on dry stockings in my wet shoes, I think no mortal amount of aggravation would have irritated me to resent it, by throwing the drop of brandy I carried in my tormentor's face. There were large arrivals from the Geelong direction, but supper

was long over before the first of the down crowd appeared, and all were a-bed long before the last of them reached their destination. I got the same bedroom I occupied on the up journey, but with rather different company. I had no choice but to take as a sleeping partner a huge, hirsute, pock-marked brute, whose beard was dripping stale tobacco-juice—two of his mates occupying the other bed, and a third lying in the narrow space between them, with his head to the closed door, which prevented the possibility of opening even a slit to let in air. Before going to sleep, these worthies, who were all ticket-of-leave men from Van Diemen's Land, amused each other, and favoured me, by relating the crimes for which they were lagged,* and the desperate deeds they committed in Tasmania. All lags scorn to admit that their sentence was earned for any trivial or pettifogging crime. Most aspire to chivalrous guilt, many to romantic poaching—a favourite transgression with the more modest convicts—and a good few to female violation, which ranks as honourable gallantry. My mates were all of the Jack Sheppard school, with the exception of my bedfellow, who told us "as how his lovily young mistress cast sheep-eyes hon 'im, an' stole to his bunk hov a night, whin they was discivered, and he was a lagged for a rape, thof it was a point hov pure affeckshun;" whereupon his mates all roared out in a bull laugh, exclaiming individually, "Vell, I'm b——d! only think of Bill being a lagged on the lovin' lay;" one adding a postscript to the effect "that his mug would want cross-ploughing an' bush-harrowin' to make it pass as Christian."

In the course of the night, the small apartment, without any vent, and five pair of lungs at work, became like a fetid oven. I gently tried the door, but it was "no go." I then had recourse to the window, which, unfortunately, was in a

* Lagged means arrested and prosecuted for the particular crime.

single frame without hinges; but, as something akin to suffocation was impending, I shook and tugged until I pulled it in with a jerk, which upset something on the sill with a noise that made two of these worthies start up, crying, "Planted by ——!" from their constant habits of nervous apprehension. But they soon became conscious of the false alarm, and, after rebuking me gruffly, one of them stretched out his big boot from the blanket, giving his mate on the floor a playful kick, lest "he'd pull the spikes out o' the boords with his b——y snorin'." It is unnecessary to remark that I did not undress going into bed with my delicate fellow, and, being ready equipped, I watched breathlessly for an opportunity of getting out through the now open window. At last I made my escape from these convicts at large, but I had barely time to mount the standing trunk of a cut-down tree, which I espied in the moonlight, when I was encircled by an infernal pack of savage dogs, that were let off their chains overnight in the back premises. They got up a most diabolical outcry, at times jumping and snapping at my extremities, while I was busily employed kicking out in front and rear, and describing in the intervals the arc of a circle with my legs to preserve my calves from being torn away. And thus was I stuck up, in reality, until the dawn came to my relief, after a two hours' purgatory.

A man coming out to chop some wood for the breakfast fires then relieved me, and I rambled round to the front, where fully two score of the too-late down arrivals of the preceding evening were stretched under the verandah in a most promiscuous manner. They were too tired even to be aware of the opening of the bar, or to be disturbed by the people from the inside picking their steps amongst them as they lay snoring on in blissful unconsciousness, until, as breakfast-time was approaching, a comical Irish waiter, with

a fun-poking snub nose, got amongst them, singing and winking, "Arouse thee, arouse thee, me bould Sweese boys" —tom-the-tom, tom-the-tom, tom-the-toy—on the back of on old cracked tambourine, which he then turned up dish-wise, demanding "three bob a nob, an' no grumblin'," for the bed-tax, which he kept pitching and jingling as he went amongst them, exciting some of the more reluctant to "shake their giblits," by assuring them that, "'pon his honour an' soul, the tay was pulling to pieces, an' the nice fresh eggs would be spoilt intirely," which latter protestation was attended with a white swelling on his merry cheeks.

I took a standing breakfast in the verandah, and started again alone at my best pace, never halting until I reached the great camping rendezvous at the Muddy Water Holes, where I found a smaller party of Chinese in the act of moving in single file, as they always travel. This lot had a chartered cart with them, in which there was a great quantity of luggage in their curious boxes and bamboo packages. The driver told me that great numbers had lately arrived in Melbourne, where they separated in drafts for the various diggings. "Bad luck to the haythins," he continued; "they won't lave a blessed crum o' gould for an honest Christian if they cum at this rate, though, indeed, I've got nothin' to allige agin the crayturs, for they've paid me dacint, for a fact."

I turned into O'Meara's as I passed to inquire if the brandy-burning gentry had paid them another visit; and at Batesford I made another short halt on the scene of the boot-pulling wager. There long lines of waggons defiled past while I waited from a down-pour of rain; but as evening was fast closing in, with dark opaque clouds crowding together in dense masses, I was constrained to go onwards without further delay. I had not surmounted the hill range close in front when I was thoroughly drenched,

and before I reached the southern slope, fronting Geelong, it was dark as night; my road, however, from the heights was quite distinct, from the lurid lights of the city, but when I got down on the flat I was in great doubt at times, and at others in extreme danger, from the number of deep and swollen water-courses which crossed my path. I got up to my waist on two occasions, and once was fairly aswim in a rapid current. Even when I got into the straggling suburb of Ashby, I was sadly confused; and as every door was shut in consequence of the pelting storm, I was often very gruffly answered when I knocked for the purpose of inquiring my way.

I got into my former quarters in the Pivot City at ten o'clock, so soaked and saturated that if I had stood in a bucket my drainage would have well-nigh filled it. The host and hostess were exceedingly kind, but as my state would not admit of my going into the parlour, I managed to dispose of a comfortable supper before the kitchen range; and as the "hot water was handy," I manufactured a few tumblers of as good whisky-punch as ever was concocted in the colony, in proof of which I sent a sample to the parlour, which caused an indiscriminate adjournment to my quarters, where we enacted a scene of "high life below stairs," which, in the end, even attracted the ladies, continuing until my clothes were perfectly dry, and my person in a state of most agreeable dampness.

I got a bed this time in a self-contained room, so that my slumbers were not disturbed by any neighbourly pastimes, and I slept so sound that on the following morning I did not hear the breakfast-bell, and only awoke in time to catch the steamer as she was in the act of casting clear of her moorings, being obliged to make rather a hazardous jump on the taffrail to get on board. As usual in those days, there

was a deck full of passengers, and some lucky diggers amongst them, under a spell of infatuation, like gamblers hurrying to a hell, longing to jump ashore at Melbourne to get rid of their dear-earned gold, and, more lamentable still, to get familiar with scenes and acquire habits which left moral stains as ineradicable as the leopard spot. Short as the passage was, it was sufficiently long for some exhibitions of extravagance of the usual sort. Diggers in 1853 were the universal purse-bearers, and wherever they were present no one else dare pay, especially if the expenditure was in drink. We had dinner on board, very good in its way, but as I don't incline to soups or sausages made in public kitchens, I declined the real mock turtle, and whispered the waiter for a pint bottle of ale instead, much to the disgust of a digger within two of me, who shot a dash of champagne into my half-filled tumbler, damning my eyes in a tone of liquid friendliness. My next neighbour was an old colonist, and looked on, although not for the first time, like an antipodean Rip Van Winkle, who still doubted his eyes as to the reality of what was going on before him, every second respiration, when disengaged, exclaiming, "Weel, wha wad o' thought o' this in feefty-ane?" However, notwithstanding his abstractedness, he gave me a nudge with his elbow when I called for fowl, which I found was intended as an admonition not to have anything to do "wi' the birdies," a pair of superannuated hens out of a lot he sold the purser, whose aged companions he was taking up to the city epicures in Melbourne, as a delicate change from everlasting beef and mutton. He further gave me some parentalish advice concerning fowls in general at that era, to the effect that I should never venture on picking a pinion sitting with my back to a wall, as farmers, from the enormous demand for

eggs and poultry, "ne'er parted wi' their chicks till they ganged past laying."

The fleet in Hobson's Bay was exceedingly augmented, owing, as the captain of the steamer told me, to the immense number of late arrivals, and the very great difficulty of getting able seamen for the homeward run. Lots offered, owing to the unnatural rates, to intercolonial ports, even to India, the Mauritius, or Valparaiso, but round the Horn they would not go at any price, as, once out of the Pacific, they fancied they got into the old mill track. The Yarra-Yarra was an aquatic version of Cheapside, from the dense crowd of crafts of every size and build lightering up goods from the bay to the city at freights very nearly equivalent to those paid from home to the colony. As we slid through them, we saw more than a dozen crews regaling themselves while sampling for their own satisfaction the cases and packages with which they were entrusted. At Raleigh's and Cole's wharfs the lighters lay so thick that we scraped the southern banks of the river in getting up, and the piles of merchandise that awaited cartage on the banks, to use a popular expletive, "was a caution." In reality, at that time —in October, 1853—the stores were wholly insufficient to hold the teeming influx of importations. Even though offices and what used to be private houses were full, and canvas as well as corrugated iron stores had lately been erected without number, storekeepers ran up their already exorbitant rents exactly one hundred per cent. I heard of a Yankee supercargo who, unable to find any stowage-place for his goods, went up at the conclusion of evening service to the Wesleyan minister, and made him a "ripping bid for the south end of his chapel, giving leave to his crowd to sit on the fixins."

Reading the long lists of arrivals every morning in the *Argus*, and skimming over the crowded and interminable manifests, an uninformed stranger would have supposed that the inhabitants of Victoria counted by millions instead of thousands, and, notwithstanding the regular summaries that went home every mail in the *Herald* and *Argus*, and the admonitory despatches of mercantile representatives, the proverbially cool, cautious, before-looking British merchants, seized with a sort of pig-headed epidemic, shut their ears and eyes to all inculcations of prudence and calculation. Write home at that period "soft goods are a complete drug," and every manufacturer in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and Huddersfield, got into a strife of emulation to see whose shipments of broadcloths and blankets would be largest. Gently intimate "that boots and shoes are heavy," and all Nottinghamshire would seem to have relapsed into barefootedness to swell their exportations. Cast any imputation on butter, and faugh-a-ballagh was the shout of "Double-rose Cork" manufacture. Even the canny Glasgow man felt it incumbent on him to drown diggers in Campbell-town and Islay, if a correspondent presumed to insinuate that "whiskeys were moving slowly." In fact—as his lordship would sum up—"the more you kept advising them, the more they kept never minding you;" and to repeat a previous remark, it would have been very difficult to find, in any other quarter of the terrestrial globe, any class of men "so obstinately bent on their own destruction as the British merchant," to the great subsequent benefit not only of the lucky digger, but of every inhabitant in Victoria, who, before another year elapsed, could purchase manufactured articles in Melbourne much cheaper than in the east-end of London. So complete in the climax was the ultimate inversion of over-forced trade, that thousands of packages of dry (and

other) goods were reshipped for home in 1854 and 1855.* I also saw hundreds and hundreds of tons of heavy goods, such as whitening, arsenic, and the like, which at one time fetched fabulous prices, carted from various stores like so much rubbish, and shot in the waste ground between Batman's Hill and the barrack, for storage was so immoderately high that all merchandise of that description, brought down below zero by over-shipments, was carted off the premises like so much manure the moment it was suspected as insufficient to cover the rent. No doubt a vast proportion of these shipments were the blue-moulded occupants of under-ground cellars, and the dust-covered tenants of back shelves for years upon years. However, even though they were produced for nothing, the freight, shipping charges, lighterage from the bay, cartage, storage, and the mild-drawn charges of commission-agents, must have very frequently left the consignors sadly on the wrong side of that equatorial line which merchants know so well how to draw. But what tended to augment this enormous evil was, that every one was more or less an importer or a consignee. Very few, in coming out, brought either sovereigns or bank drafts. They brought whatever goods or manufactures their special friends or acquaintances at home most sagely recommended, without ever once inquiring whether they were intended for the frigid zone or the tropics—whether for the superfine civilisation of India, or the aboriginal usages of the Bight of Benin. Everything was sure to sell in Victoria. It was all the same to the digger whether he sank a wet hole in pagammas or moleskins—whether he cradled his stuff in a muslin jacket or a buffalo robe, or travelled in mocassins or seven-leagued boots—out everything came, though it was "neither fish,

* Even in December, 1857, the ship I returned in brought back 1500 casks of Irish butter from an overcrowded market.

nor flesh, nor good red herring;" and not from the British Isles alone, but from every maritime kingdom, republic, or dependency of importance on the face of the globe, whether north or south of the line, particularly in the Indian Ocean; though I believe the Australian exports from Boston and New York alone were, for a while, in their particular line, equal to all the wants of the colony. From the Cape of Good Hope, round by Algoa Bay, Port Natal, the Mauritius, Ceylon, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Canton, Hong-Kong, Batavia—every old, obsolete, decaying commodity that had been mouldering in deserted shops or dilapidated stores seemed to be shovelled heads and points into ships' holds and despatched to omniverous Melbourne; while Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart Town, Launceston, and the New Zealand settlements, stripped themselves so bare of necessaries that they approached the condition of the improvident man, who reduced himself to one shirt, and had to stay in bed while that was washing. Is it to be wondered at, then, that storage was as difficult to find as lodgings during the season of the Great Exhibition, or that rickety lofts brought in a larger revenue than the Brussels-carpeted private rooms at Mivart's Hotel? "If this state of things continues long," remarked an old lag, "cracksmen may hook it, for there won't be any damned corner left for storing away stolen goods."

Oh, they were rare times! and most professional men even, in good practice in law, medicine, and engineering, &c., had fingers deep in the mercantile pie; every one was more or less a merchant, and you might take your oath that the man who was not a merchant was a "commission agent." In the Supreme Court, nearly every witness examined at Nisi Prius pulled off his right-hand glove to swear he was a "commission agent." In the County Court, even in its

10*l.* jurisdiction, every polished book-kisser answered the usual interrogatory, "A commission agent, sir, or been;" and his worship the mayor, at his court, had a large proportion of street broils and brothel robberies elucidated by members of that numerous and influential class. They kept grand independent establishments, while the representatives of London, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Dublin hereditary firms roughed it in common boarding-houses. They cantered their shop nags out to St. Kilda and Brighton, when it was absolutely considered a proud thing to be seen riding home on the roof of an omnibus; and they turned out on the Great Reach esplanade with gorgeously attired ladies, got up and maintained in utter disregard of expense, while the afore-alluded-to stingy hounds were content meanly to "bide a wee" for a cheaper era, before they would venture in bringing out their lawful wives to the colony. But they were not so very imprudent after all. They did their business in true antipodean style. Anticipating the final clearance, they began by calculating their commission, advertising the "grand clearing off sale," merely to ascertain what balance might still remain due to them on foot of the whole account sales; for in the revulsion that followed the piping times of 1852 and early 1853, it was a lucky lot of goods that did not leave a loss; and instead of those crisp, transparent slips which are generally expected as the consummation of a transaction, there were empty letters softening down the unpleasant result by the certain assurance that markets would improve before the next consignment. It was quite a common thing, before the end of 1853, to see a string of advertisements "calling for consignees to come and take away their goods, else they would be stored at their risk;" but it was a very uncommon thing indeed for consignees to call, notwithstanding, because they well knew

that goods so advertised rarely paid the freight. I gave my reader some idea of the demand for boots and shoes immediately after my arrival, but *quantum mutatus ab illo*, when I came down from Ballarat I saw several good lots of Wellington boots sold at the rate of 7s. 6d. per pair, and some patent leathers, small size, at half the money.

I was not four months absent at Ballarat, and yet the change in the aspect of Melbourne was truly wonderful, not to be imagined or understood in the ordinary growth or progress of Old World cities. The inanimate aspect of the city improvement was in some measure to be accounted for by the setting in of the dry season; and although Flinder's-street could not boast of a smooth surface, it looked infinitely better in powder than in lather. In my short walk from the wharf up Market-square the alteration in personal costume was really remarkable: respectable men had mustered up moral courage to wear frock-coats, and merchants ventured to the Chamber of Commerce in the regular British "bell-topper,"* some of the nattier going the length of sporting kid gloves. I remarked some new buildings of brick and mortar and bluestone, and encountered several groups of new arrivals, including some strings of Celestials, as well as other foreign physiognomies. Not having had a scissors to my hair since I went up country, I went into my friend Professor Sands's, from whom I made certain of having everything fresh or important in the way of news. He was in his old canvas premises in Market-square, but had received notice to quit, as well as all his brother squatters, although he paid as much as 7*l.* a week for his small stand to the corporation, who, he said, "were going to make no end of a place of it, with some money they were in treaty for with a London Jew."

* Bell-topper was the derisive name given by diggers to old style hat, supposed to indicate the dandy swell.

I remarked that there was a strange murmur of music about, which, as the wind favoured, increased to a crash, no matter from what art it came. I listened with an inquisitive astonishment, hoping to extract an explanation from the professor, who was my operator, but he was a listener this time himself, endeavouring to get at the details of the cause of a great fire which took place the night before. In one of the pauses of the narration, "I supposed the premises were insured." "Lord bless your innocent eyebrows!" quickly interposed the professor, "stores here never catch fire till they're well covered. I reckon, if I put a tar and feather overall on this crib, a hot blast furnace wouldn't raise a blister afore I put up a tin label like that over yonder, to notice like that my policy was all serene; but once, cappin, that black tin receipt goes up, look out, I tell you-u-u. Hell's a humbug to it while it lasts. Niagara wouldn't put it out." Then turning to a Bendigo digger: "I wouldn't mind betting you a shout round for this respectable party, that if you, in your way up, stick a 'Sun Fire Insurance' tin ticket on the side of that dried-up vulcano Mount Macenden, and then shake the ashes out o' your pipe within twenty leagues, that it will go off in hot fits afore next morning, and make the kangaroos jump a few into the bargain. Nothin', take my word, makes things run to smoke like insurin' them. I larnt that afore I came to Australia." From the general conversation, I learnt that fires were almost of nightly occurrence lately, and most of them of mysterious, not to say suspicious, origin, not a single calamity occurring in which the property was not prudentially covered at least one hundred per cent. above its value. In mostly all cases they attained an unconquerable mastery before they came to be discovered, from the sparseness of the population residing on business premises, and from the scantiness of the police force. But even when they were noticed in the earlier stages, there was

seldom any amount of valuable property rescued, in consequence of the want of any properly organised fire-brigade force. There had been searching inquests in some notable cases just before I came down, but matters had been so adroitly managed in all of them save one, that the results resembled that of the Crimean Commission, which ascertained that there was a frightful waste and destruction of life and property, but that there was nobody to blame. In the one case two Jews, brothers, were arrested on circumstantial evidence that would jeopardise a pope, but they were arraigned twice without a conviction, and then turned loose on society again. In many cases the arrangements for conflagration were so very flagrant, that out-spoken people did not hesitate to express their convictions in the most open manner, and in the most public places, that arson had been committed; but the injured individuals never dared to vindicate their characters in a court of justice. As the professor suggested, "when stocks are reduced, people will look sharper arter their candle-snuffs; but one good thing, anyhow," said he, dabbing a puff of hot lather on the chin of a complacent patient, and rubbing it in vigorously as if he did not know him from Adam—"one good thing, anyhow, bricks will go off like hot buns this summer"—a remark that caused the foam to ripple, for the shavee was a leviathan brick-burner, then getting 17*l.* per thousand for half-baked rubbish, which contractors were obliged to buy up for want of better.

The professor informed me that his people, as he called the Yankees, were coming in "almighty tall strings"—merchants from New York, as well as diggers from California; but, he said, "the Californians don't like the legal ideas here, nohow. The shuttin' up at eleven of nights, and at rantin' time of Sundays, goes again their grain consyderable. One

top sawyer who comed slick down to wake us up in the mixin' of gin-slings, cock-tails, and brandy-smashers, got warnin' for keepin' a man from splittin' after twelve o'clock of a Saturday night, though, as he said, he never shut his bar durin' his hull three years' time in Francisco." "I hope," said I, "they won't come preaching their annexation doctrine in these latitudes, else I fear the long grumbling between John Bull and Jonathan will come to blows." "Don't get up your pulse, cappin, on that pynt," he replied; "whin Uncle Sam goes a preachin' polticks he makes a pretty smart guess about his crowd; an' when he goes a filibusterin' he keeps his eyes skinned, too, sirree. He don't bounce where he's like to fall through, but sooner nor get jammed, he'll fight his corner. He's plenty on hand up north—Sonora, an' Mexico, an' the Ismus; he'll not mind meddlin' with kangaroo land this moon, I tell you-u-u, that's a fact."

In crossing over Collins-street to Bank-place I found that both the western and eastern hills were in process of cutting down, and that macadamisation was in active progress. At the turnstile, where I turned from this great thoroughfare up to my brother's premises, a grand auction room was going up where I left a tumble-down weatherboard concern. From the great dimensions of the building I stopped to have a look, and, while stopping, I ascertained that the common stonemasons employed had 30s. per day, bricklayers 5s. more, and the unskilled attendants 15s. I almost wished I could forget my antecedents and shoulder the hod, from which employment I could earn, without provoking lumbago, the very respectable income of 273*l.* 10s. per annum. I found my brother's little store finished and cram-full of store goods, paying a good per-centage on the outlay. And now, being a citizen again, I must give you a few chapters of metropolitan life.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rejoin the W——ds on Emerald Hill—The new Inhabitants of that Quarter—Bird-cage Walk under Decoration—Improvement of the Hill—Contract a Dislike for promiscuous Society—Select an isolated Residence—The Brass-band Invasion—Their immense Earnings—Progress of Municipal and Social Improvement—Immense Importation of old-fashioned Carriages—Yankee Speculation in that Line successful—Communication with the Interior in those Days—Fast Travelling established by T—d—n H—d—s, and not by American Enterprise—The Digger and Cyprian Effrontery gives Way before the advancing Tide of Refinement—Religious Intolerance, Cant, and Hypocrisy—Its Mode of Operation and its Effects—Consequences of Missionary Officiousness in the Sandwich Islands—The old and new City Burial-grounds—Causes of excessive Mortality explained—Mortality amongst Children accounted for—Extract from the Quarterly Medical Journal—Commentary on the Extracts—Climate of Victoria is undergoing an agreeable Change—The Cause and Effect—Influence of the Climate, especially on Married Ladies.

Before taking a deliberate survey of the progress of the city in my absence, I crossed over to Emerald Hill early on the morning after my return to visit Mr. and Mrs. W——d, get my breakfast, and make arrangements, if possible, for remaining with them while waiting for the trial. I was fortunate enough to secure the quarters, and, what was still better, we had the little house to ourselves, as Mr. W——d had obtained very well-paid employment, which, with my weekly payment, enabled him to dispense with any other lodgers—a desideratum we prized exceedingly, though in truth it was no better than an amiable, or perhaps, more literally speaking, a flimsy delusion, to flatter ourselves on

enjoying the pleasurable privacy of "our own fireside," when we were only separated by a calico screen from our neighbours, who could hear our lowest whispers, and who appeared, moreover, to be people of inquiring minds, from the fact of their having made preparations, like the peep-holes in a drop-scene, through which they could see all our goings on, never hesitating to remark aloud on anything that challenged their critical observation, either in a complimentary or sneering manner.

The rent-collector and his family, and the W——ds, were the only people remaining of original or aboriginal inhabitants, nor can I affirm that the new comers were an improvement on their predecessors, although they were all, I may say, carriage-folk; that is, they took carriage airings, and went into town in landaus to do their shopping. By much the larger proportion of them were ladies—bless the mark! grass widows—whose lords had returned to the diggings, to dig up fresh supplies, leaving their sleeping partners to subsist on their jewellery during the low-water season. They lived most generally in trios, and if they escaped the direct Cochin-China influenza, they got a collateral touch of the contagion, for they possessed whole bevies of screaming cockatoos, speaking parrots, and whistling magpies. Every verandah seemed an incipient aviary; so great, in truth, was the mob of cages suspended from the eaves and prop-posts, I christened the locality "Bird-cage Walk." And pretty birds they were, most of them. If the doctrine of metempsychosis is really one of the great secrets of our hereafter, I verily believe that the picked souls of some of the most accomplished blackguards that ever graced the earth took up their temporary abodes in the breasts of the feathered tenants of this locality on Emerald Hill, for more select morceaux of obscenity and blasphemy could not well be gleaned from the lowest

haunts of Old World infamy than came pat from the tongues of those pretty pets, to the overabounding delight of their mistresses, who evidently prized the birds for their proficiency in slang and infamy.

The hill had emerged from its chaos, and was now marked by rectangular lines, spreading over a great extent, the corners, in many instances, marked by buildings of more ambitious pretensions, some at that period, even in the unfinished state, being distinguished by those notices which are intended to apprise the public and the authorities that it was the intention of their proprietors to cheat and poison their customers under the sanction of the law. There were not many brick or stone edifices in process of erection, but the weatherboarded houses were of a handsome and substantial character, calculated to favour the tide of residence already setting in to that quarter by mercantile and government clerks, who were within an easy walk of their offices, while their heads migrated daily to South Garra, Gardiner's Creek, and St. Kilda. I was always partial to the hill, from its healthful position and the fine views it afforded; but though deeply imbued with the usual gregarious attribute of our race in early life, I found its impulse oozing out, like Bob Acres's valour, ever since I arrived in the colony. I liked to walk alone, to commune alone, to live as much as possible alone—I don't mean in single, solitary blessedness, but alone in the little circle, selected with care and circumspection.

Actuated by these feelings, I went to make inquiries about an isolated house, attracted towards it by its loneliness, standing as it was, far apart by itself, on a sea of verdure, removed from the noise of neighbourhood. I was delighted in reading a bill on the window, notifying it "was either to be let or sold," and I strove to induce Mr. W——d to be-

come the tenant, on the encouragement that I would find him four permanent lodgers. I also made inquiries concerning it from the "house agents" entrusted with the letting, and they asked easy terms, candidly admitting that its complete isolation compelled them to ask a moderate price or a low rent, as people did not care for being so far apart by themselves, lest they should be occasionally submitted to the sticking up ordeal. I, however, made up my mind that if W——d would not take it, and if my plans became so far altered as to oblige me to live much in or about town, I would rent or buy it myself.

After my inspection I went into Melbourne, about that time of day when fashionable club men "consider the West-end well aired." I remarked the same soft, tremulous vibration of distant music that caught my ears on the previous day, but on this occasion I was determined to fathom the mystery, which turned out, on inquiry, to be no mystery at all, but a wholesale immigration of German brass bands, Italian organ-grinders, and French performers on the hurdy-gurdy, which had taken place during my absence, all working away in the most promiscuous manner, and reaping what to them was, in its literal sense, a golden harvest. Poor devils who, in their own countries, never saw gold save in an illusory sense on the basso-relievo of brown gingerbread, whose daily gleanings of sous, groschen, or maravedis, after furnishing forth a miserable meal to themselves, scarcely afforded a crumb to their white mice or a nut to their monkeys, stood in the streets of Melbourne receiving a constant plurial tribute of sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns, in return for music that would drive swine into anguish, or turn a whole brewery of Barclay and Perkins into vinegar. In reply to the interrogatory on the lips of my reader, I reply that they came out as free emigrants—

not free either, in the colonial or Park-street sense, but so far free that they got free passages in return for sitting all through the voyage on the forecastle from the time of deck-washing in the morning until the termination of the first watch at night, bathing the passengers in melody; for, curious enough, in that emulative competition which arose amongst the great shipping interests in the emigration trade, the witchery of sweet sounds was most industriously enlisted. The Wigrams and the Greens, the White Stars, the Black Bulls, the Eldriges, and the Eagles lines, after exhausting every other device for seducing passengers, had recourse to the agency of music, vying with each other to see which should bear the largest and the strongest band; and dock touters—as I am informed—at Liverpool and London endeavoured to run up their respective lines by exaggerating the strength and power of their performers. It is a statistical fact that Australian emigration has diminished the poor-house population in Great Britain, and I feel fully satisfied that a glimpse at continental registries would show a comparative diminution amongst disciples of Orpheus in the countries alluded to; nor should I be a whit surprised when I next visit Boulogne, to find that the pair of Bob and Joan harpists who tortured the pier promenaders out of their coppers, are leading great monster concerts at all the new rushes on the diggings. But as I shall have more to say about street musicians if I remember it, I shall go on to another of the sights which grew up with equal suddenness.

I found in the course of my rambles that not only were the streets more widely macadamised, but the leading thoroughfares were, to a great extent, kerbed and channelled, so that along the prospective lines of trottoirs where great dead seas of adhesive mud separated the scattered patches of flagging, light-shod pedestrians were enabled to walk heel to toe along

their margins on the kerbstones, often, I must say, meeting where it was impossible for either to give way without submitting to an alternative which rarely failed to gather a crowd of grinning witnesses to watch the dénoûment. In the fashionable centre of Collins-street the increased number of unmistakable ladies was perfectly obvious, settling down to their inherent avocation of shopping in a very natural and becoming way. Private equipages were also decidedly on the increase, affording another agreeable evidence of the onward march of civilisation, even though the coachmen's perukes were not quite up to the Belgravian standard, nor their etiquette either, for these worthies, when they drew up opposite the Howell and James's of the place, pulled out their short pipes and match-boxes, puffing away cross-legged on the hammercloths, while their mistresses were straining their delicate wrists in trying to turn the obstinate handles of the carriage doors. I saw with my own eyes the state coachman of the mayor pull up sharp at a popular public in the city, and was near enough to hear her ladyship stand up and exclaim, "For shame, John; drive on. What will the people say?" and John's reply as well: "Never you mind, mam, the people's not onreasonable; but if you're distressed you can walk on to the corner." And as I really have a bad memory, and have kept my notes in a jumble, I will take this opportunity of saying that the few britschkas, the landaus, and cabriolets which moved about had a winking look about them, as if they came suddenly into light after having been immured in the gloom of pantechnicons for half a century. The harness, too, savoured very much of protracted imprisonment; and as the horses bore no external evidence of having been made to order, I will leave the filling up of the picture to the imagination of my reader, with this simple remark, that if a Collins-street turn-out of 1853 could have been sud-

denly whisked to the banks of the Serpentine, it would have very quickly attracted its cynosure of admirers. I saw several large importations of carriages of all descriptions, muffled up in haybands and bolsters, to convey the notion that they were fresh from the hands of the Long-acre or Baker-street builder; but I firmly believe that a really new vehicle, for purely pleasurable purposes, had not been shipped at any British port for Australia until late in 1854. Yet all sold at excessive prices, though a monstrous proportion were wholly unsuitable to the country, from the nature of its climate and the character of its roads. If a prosperous merchant or a rising professional man turned up his nose or curled his lip at a lumbering landau made for a fast family of the last century, Mr. Molony, who made his pile behind the bar of a public, thought it the beau-idéal of a coach, and took it home in hasty triumph to see how the mistress, the maid, and the young ones would look on it in the back yard without the horses. It was in the vehicle line the Yankees made their best hit. Their light one and two-horse buggies, and their cabs on the same principle, at first frightened away purchasers from their slim, spider-like, and apparently unsubstantial construction; but as Jonathan delighted in spinning past his less go-ahead cousins in these imponderous carriages, which with their full party were much more easily drawn than the great robust British vehicle in its empty state, particularly through the soft pap of infant roads, and as they furnished demonstrative proof of their lasting qualities notwithstanding their seeming fragility, the lazy prejudice of John Bull gradually broke up and dispersed, just as did his antediluvian penchant for old flat-bottomed sea-bruisers, which, thank Heaven! have been run off our ocean thoroughfare by the beautiful yacht-like clippers of American origin. Once the ice was broken, and that Mrs. Bull and the

calvelings took courage and respired free in those Yankee conveyances, there was a regular run on them, and even in the deep seclusion of the Bush, and on the difficult highways of the diggings, they might be seen rattling along at the briskest of paces.

There had been some feeble and ill-organised attempts at coaching communication with the interior in 1853, but they were neither safe, nor speedy, nor regular, and passengers who paid exorbitant fares in expectation of being whisked up to Bendigo, were at least three times on every stage politely asked to alight and walk hip deep through the mire even in the dark, to "ase the poor horses," until the system so closely approximated to the mode in which Irish spalpeens are duped into working their passage on the Grand Canal—viz. by driving the horses along the banks—that people at last came to exclaim, like young Pat, "Arrah, be japers! I might as well walk as be travelling on fut this aways." The mail could not be safely entrusted to those companies who never made a through passage without a break-down of greater or lesser magnitude; and if the accident perversely occurred in a district that could not boast a blacksmith, there was no alternative but to abandon the wreck and trudge on as one best might.

Here, again, our Yankee cousins did our state some service, for, together with their cabs and buggies, they imported numbers of those low, open waggon-coaches with leathern springs which are alone found equal to the corduroy roads and broken forest tracks of the far western territory. The failure in the South Australian travelling was altogether, as has been subsequently proved, owing to the unsuitableness of the carriages. The horses were incomparable, the harness without fault, and the drivers possessed all the practical skill and pluck of their country, but

the carriages, however cramped, and plated, and bolted with iron, could not be securely constructed—in fact, their strength, so to say, was their weakness; their rigid iron stiffness snapped where the pliant leather yielded and surmounted the obstacle with safety. Another peculiarity of the American waggon-coach is, that it is built on a single perch without a traversing fore-carriage—a great element of weakness in the British vehicle, and a contrivance in no wise necessary driving over the open tracks of a bush road.

However, as I have already said, although numbers of the American waggon-coaches were in Melbourne, they were looked upon as the curious would examine strange weapons in an armoury—more from the novelty of their construction than from any remote supposition that they ever could be used with effect. Even the Yankees themselves, though aware of their adaptability, never brought them into use in Victoria until an English gentleman, whose wits and energies were aroused from fashionable lethargy by the deprivation of his parliamentary privileges, put the first batch in active motion. It is a popular delusion to imagine that safe and rapid travelling in Victoria is due to American enterprise—a mistaken supposition which has lately taken root because a clever go-ahead Yankee managed to associate his name prominently with the business, and to put a majority of his countrymen in possession of the ribbons. But honour to him to whom honour is due, T—d—n H—d—s was the first man who, on his own hook, started and successfully established a line of fast coaches in Victoria. He was as much the pioneer of fast travelling in the colony, as John Pascoe Fawkner was the precursory apostle of settlement and civilisation. Mr. H—d—s, in 1853, purchased up a lot of these Yankee coaches, got together mobs of well-selected horses, superintended personally all the preliminary prepara-

tions, starting and maintaining with remarkable punctuality all the time of his management a line of coaches from Geelong to Ballarat, over the identical track which I have twice travelled with my reader. If western Americans originated the project, it would not, nor should not, have been a matter of surprise, but that an English gentleman, accustomed to tool his teams over the smooth turnpike-roads of England, or the well-maintained thoroughfares of the Continent, should be the man to carry passengers (really carry them) through the swamps, the ravines, the crab-holes, and other impracticabilities of the Australian bush, is—even to me who have brought wheeled vehicles over strange places—a subject of wonder and admiration. His enterprise was as well supported as he could have wished, the up and down coaches at 10*l.* fares were always crammed full, nor was there a chance of a seat unless it was secured some days in advance, so that the practicability and payability of rapid bush travelling were at once successfully demonstrated by an English gentleman "all of the olden time," and not by an American of modern growth. Mr. H—d—s embarked soon after in another leviathan enterprise, which, holding out for a time much greater promise of emolument, induced him to sell out of his coaching business. It was purchased up by associated American capitalists, who, it must be admitted, went energetically to work in developing and improving the capabilities of Victorian intercommunication, evoking a spirit of native competition, which has placed travelling by horse conveyance in that colony ahead of any other part of the world, taking the nature of the difficulties, the various hinderances and obstructions, into consideration.

But I find I am travelling rather fast—far in advance of my present purpose, which is to show the rapid and substantial progress of rational habits in a new city during a

very brief absence. I have stated my observance of the improved costume of gentlemen generally, and of the civilising appearance of ladies in the prosecution of their out-door duties, and I now have concurrently to remark on the very obvious and gratifying moral effect produced by these circumstances. Vice and brazen effrontery, which, in its heyday, unembarrassed by contrast, held its sway in Collins and Elizabeth streets, swaggering in drunken riot wheresoever they listed, were evidently beginning to cower and shrink like the naked, filthy aboriginal, before the decencies and moderation of superior morality and civilisation. The coarse rudeness which the digger mistook for manly independence, proved itself base metal in juxtaposition with the inherent bearing of the man of moral training and education; and the strumpet effrontery of the courtesan, which amounts to bravery in a physical row, blanched and receded before the transcendental presence of the high-bred, virtuous woman. There was no mistake about it. The rowdy digger and his bloated paramour within a few months passively succumbed to the march of moral influence. They felt out of their element where before they were the incarnations of vicious insolence, and they sought out other haunts where they could indulge in their favourite strut and jargon.

I am not of opinion that legal discipline in religious culture had anything to do with this propitious change, although reformers and fanatics were bustling about with an officious activity, which was positively surprising in a city where there were such ever-present opportunities for embarking in practical and profitable employment. There were countless projects for restricting the consumption of strong drinks: temperance and teetotal societies, numerous in their distinctive appellations, but lamentably scanty in the ranks of

their disciples. The blessings and benefits of the Maine liquor law were discussed and descanted on at their frequent meetings with the tepid oratory peculiar to tea-fights and bread-and-butter engagements, where turnipy-looking gentlemen and whey-coloured ladies make examples of themselves in consuming these dropsical ingredients to the general edification and improvement. Then there were "Young Men's Christian Associations," and "Young Men John Knox's Societies," and societies of all ages and sexes for the "Better Observance of the Sabbath," who, finding that the force of preaching and personal mortification produced no fruits, all concentrated their influence on their legislative representatives, inducing them to pass a law which penally prohibited the sale of fermented and spirituous liquors on Sundays. But, like all efforts to make communities moral, religious, or temperate by legal or coercive means, it signally failed in its effect. The evil broke out in fresh places, with a train of concomitant evils of an equally contagious and demoralising character, amongst which hypocrisy, fraud, and smuggling may be enumerated. The country publican would sell on the sly to the thirsty family party from town, suffering under the evaporating effects of a hot wind, silencing the policeman—sworn to do his duty—by *ad libitum* potations; and, by a curious compromise of conscience, I have seen magistrates, who would have considered it an infringement of their judicial oath to have taken a glass of sherry at the Royal Hotel, St. Kilda, go into a sly grog-tent hard by to eat oysters and drink brandy-and-water. Some of the more zealous of the water-swillers—serenely conscientious men as they all are—indulged in analogous liberties with their pure mental emotions by adopting the calling of spies and tempters, luring the tradesmen to crime and then procuring them punishment—a latter-day mission of saintli-

ness—truly a modern edition of "putting the cup into Benjamin's sack and then accusing him of theft." But the crusade proved a dead failure. Perspiration would flow, and thirst would follow, and necessity made its own laws, leaving those enacted by the Legislature to hang up like a sack of collapsed hypocrisy—still in force, but without effect. For, without repealing the Sabbatarian prohibition, the police got orders from their superiors to wink at the practice, and while the proprietor of the Royal durst not open his front door of Sundays lest he should outrage a circle of snuffling psalm-singers outside on the esplanade, all the back doors were in effect taken off their hinges to facilitate the approach of people under the influence of the most despotic of appetites.

I hope I may not be considered a sneerer at moral practices or becoming religious observances, but I wish I was endowed with sufficient discernment and ability to knout all canting whiners into candour and honesty, fellows—many of them—who, while "they turn up their tongues into their nostrils" to delude their hearers by gross parodies on sanctification, are, all the time of their hollow homilies, burning with itching palms and libidinous desires. Melbourne was, in my time, always well supplied with troops of these designing knaves, ranting and roaring on every eminence, lecturing in every corner, and tract-flying wherever a penny was to be found. For a time they were formidable, and Melbourne seemed fated to fall under the sway of swarming Stiggenses and Mawworms. But, in their eagerness for supremacy, they gave such unerring indications of intolerable tyranny, that even moderate and timid men resolved to spurn and trample on the odious yoke.

When in the Sandwich Islands in 1850, I saw enough of canting, designing missionary Methodism to stamp it in my

mind as a gross scheme—a monster mistake—a calling at flagrant and ungodly variance with the all-wise beneficence of the Almighty. These men, arriving in advance of general Christian emigration, cajoled the unsophisticated chiefs of these emerald gems of the Pacific into the belief that they were all-wise and infallible. They framed penal laws for their primitive conclaves to enact, they selected their own creatures as the administrators, and the effect of some of these studiously designed laws, though not in operation for the tenth of a century, is, that the native population is on the high road to extinction to make room for the collateral broods of these self-constituted apostles. This is christianising with a vengeance. This is

> The patent age of new inventions
> For killing bodies and for curing souls,

all propagated with the most selfish, and often, to my knowledge, with the most sensual intentions. The primitive and immemorial habits of this fine and discerning people, suddenly stricken down by act of Parliament, naturally, if not necessarily, developed themselves in the most God-forbidden manner. It was decreed by missionary wisdom that sexual intercourse, without the sanction of marriage, should be visited by the severest penalties; but a tropical race, constitutionally incapable of resisting the impulses of nature, and ignorant of the solemn sanctity of the seventh sacrament, were soon driven to learn and practise the frightful alternatives of abortion and child murder in order to evade the punishment instituted by their Christian preceptors for their indulgence in traditional custom. Thus the sin of fornication was supplemented by the crime of murder, and all within the knowledge of the apostolic missionary; for, when I was there, it was perfectly notorious there was not an infant on the whole island on which the capital, Honolulu, is situated,

nor a child of tender years; and the divine truths of the Gospel were expounded in village groups, where young women openly sat suckling puppies and piglings instead of their own natural offspring. Even the harmless athletic exercises of these fine islanders were forbidden by missionary law; and a people who, a generation before, were remarkable for physical power and muscular development, are now doomed to dwindle and become effete. Thus, I verily believe, will it ever be where cant and rant is omnipotent. There will nature and nature's laws be subverted, and Divine precept strangled to subserve selfishness, lust, and political aggrandisement.

"What, asleep again, Joe?" Wardle used to exclaim to his fat boy. "What, wandering again?" must I now exclaim to my truant pen, with the reminder that Melbourne is the theme and not Honolulu. But, in order that I may glide rather than skip from topic to topic, let me, before I emerge from the serious line, allude to the strange anomalies of Australian philanthropists, whom neither failure nor satire could reclaim in the northern hemisphere, nor antipodean influences reform at the other side of the globe. One would think that the scandalous prominence of vice and irreligion, in their most hideous and degrading phases in Melbourne, would have afforded an ample field where the moralist and divine might toil at their labour of love assiduously and unremittingly, without ever having to repine at a moment's leisure, or suffer from the distractions of foreign destitution. But, alas for the aimless unaccountability of human effort and the fickleness of reclamatory enthusiasm, those tender, super-sanctified consciences which groaned in agony at the idea of tasting alcohol on the Lord's-day, could witness with composure the grossest mid-day exhibitions of drunken prostitution, and, instead of endeavouring to mode-

rate the abomination by the institution of reformatories, or restrain it by invoking the intervention of the strong arm of the law, they shut their eyes to scenes little, if at all, short of the infernal excesses which drew down Divine wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah, and employed themselves in originating "Aboriginal Protection Societies," "Missions for the Christian Instruction of the Chinese," and such-like canting institutions; exhorting their fanatical dupes to rush to the rescue of Pagan souls, while erring Christians were abandoned to go to —— headforemost by express train.

Another serious subject that confronted me was the city burial-ground, which, on my arrival in the colony, was quite a suburban institution, so far removed from the high-water mark of city settlement, that I imagined the foremost wave of commercial encroachment would not approach its margin for another generation, and so spacious in its area that I conceived the average mortality would not subject it to a crush in a like period. But one-third of a single year produced the change which I could not have assigned to a quarter of a century. Elizabeth-street stretched its northern extremity to the limits of the graveyard; Swanston-street projected still further in the same direction, with a large cluster of population at its end; and North Melbourne, to the north and north-west, sprang up like an incipient and independent city, making the rural cemetery an intramural burial-ground, and constraining the corporate authorities to lay out another city for the dead in a much more remote locality. At the first blush, this astounding fact would favour the inference that Melbourne was frightfully unhealthy, when coffins came to shoulder each other with such extreme rapidity. But such was not the case, nor is it now, notwithstanding its bad surface-drainage and the long intervals of

drought, during which accumulations of ordure and refuse remain festering and exhaling their foul odours around the various dwellings. The average of deaths was increased enormously, in the first place, by the vast tide of emigration; secondly, by the state of health in which a large proportion of these emigrants were landed, especially the children, while the difficulty of procuring anti-scorbutic diet for nursing mothers necessarily precipitated the crisis of every disease in infantile constitutions; thirdly, by the effect of what may be termed privations in personal habits or comforts of a numerous class of the more respectable emigrants, accustomed to luxuries at home; and generally to the frightful mortality directly traceable to intemperance, excess, exposure, and accident amongst those unfortunate classes of both sexes who formed too large an element in the population.

It is a wide-spread impression which has obtained great circulation in the mother country, that Victoria is a climate particularly fatal to children; and as I believe this is a most erroneous idea, so far as my observation and inquiry would enable me to judge, I will take a few steps in advance in order to offer some remarks on a subject which, as well as I can foresee, I shall not have occasion again to revert to, sheltered also by the excuse that at the juncture concerning which I at present write, medical statistics of a comprehensive or reliable character were not in existence. The official report of "Births, Deaths, and Marriages," to which I shall refer, is the third annual report issuing from the department of the Registrar-General, in connexion with which I shall extract from, and join in comment with, an excellent colonial periodical, *The Australian Quarterly Medical Journal* for April, 1857. It appears by the report that "the total number of deaths of all ages in Victoria for the year ending the 30th of June, 1856, was 5760, of which 2668 (or about 46 per cent.) were children under five years of age; and of the 2668

children who died, 2420 (or about 90 per cent.) were under two years of age.

"The questions which naturally suggest themselves upon seeing such a fearful rate of infant mortality are: Can anything be done to diminish it? are any of the causes preventable? or, must we patiently submit to it as an inevitable condition of infantile existence in this part of the world? We find by our own experience, which agrees with that of the oldest and most experienced physicians in the city of Melbourne, that it is attributable to the following causes:

1. Improper diet.
2. Want of exercise in the open air.
3. Badly ventilated bedrooms and localities.
4. Occupying the same room with parents.
5. Want of due attention to cleanliness.
6. Too long-continued nursing.
7. The administration of narcotics.
8. Unsuitable clothing.
9. The ordinary diseases of childhood, all of which are aggravated by one or more of the foregoing causes."

Now, before joining in an analysis of this list of causes with the reviewer, I cannot help observing that his deduction, which appears to be wholly founded on naked numerical comparison, is not a fair or sustainable one on which to ground such an assertion as a "fearful rate of infant mortality." No doubt 2668 would be a fearful rate of infant mortality as compared with a total of 5760, if all the attending circumstances were such as are ordinarily to be found in getting at a statistical compilation of the kind; and here let me quote a note of the Assistant-Registrar-General from his *Facts and Figures* on this identical assertion: "Whatever degree of significance may attach to the fact that nearly half the total annual deaths in Victoria occur among children,

depends upon the per-centage of mortality found to obtain among the mean infant and adult population constantly living. In like manner, before we can appreciate the statement, that out of the total deaths under 5 years 90 per cent. of that number died under 2 years of age, we must know how many were living, on an average, within the respective terms 'under 2' and from '2 to 5,' during the given term over which the fatal cases were spread. The mere number of deaths in any locality is no safe guide to the actual rate of mortality therein, and affords no calculable comparison with the number occurring in any other locality, unless, indeed, the elements of the population as to age and sex in both places are equal, or, if not, that the differences are known, and the consequent corrections applied."

In reference to the first cause, the reviewer says: "It is the principal one, exciting diseased action, and rendering the system susceptible to it from the adulteration of cow's or goat's milk, and the use of gruel, arrowroot, panado, and potato sop superinducing impaired digestion, diarrhœa, and fatal dysentery: hence marasmus and protracted dentition." Without presuming to enter on professional refinements, I think, as I said a little before, that the adulteration of the mother's milk should be set down as the primary cause of infantile delicacy in Victoria, because I feel assured that, if the report contained a column tracing the infant mortality in its proportionate amounts to the different classes of society, it would be found that in the decent and respectable ranks, where mothers lead lives of temperance and regularity, infants at the breast are as healthy as in any other country; while, on the other hand, those nursed by mothers whose constitutions are weakened, whose blood and marrow are diseased and vitiated by vile alcoholic compounds, cannot yield healthy or nutritious milk to the sucking babe. A

cow's milk can be improved or deteriorated in richness by the effects of diet, and I suppose the same natural analogy would apply to woman.

Secondly, "want of exercise" is prescribed for by the reviewer by advising the "hire of an additional servant"—a remedial measure rarely attainable to the bulk of the people in any country, but especially in Victoria, where wages are a positive prohibition except to the favoured few. I will take the liberty of tacking on to "want of exercise," want of common care. Mothers who do not take care of themselves are equally indifferent about their offspring, and the fruits of those hasty, uncared-for animal associations so rife in the earlier days were never regarded with real maternal solicitude. I have known mothers to leave their children whole days in their tents without coming home to give them the breast, returning at last too much inebriated to hear or hearken to their famishing cries. I have known, too, instances of children being partially devoured by pigs in the absence of their parents.

"Badly ventilated rooms" is, in my opinion, a very partial evil in Victoria, where, according to my early experience, ventilation, save in the heart of Melbourne alone, was rather in excess—most certainly in the abodes of the humbler classes of town folk—while in the diggings, where fully one-half of the entire population resided in calico tents, it is scarcely to be conjectured that either old or young suffered from an insufficiency of air. I will only notice one other cause,—

"The administration of narcotics,"—which I have no doubt, from the exigencies of married life in the colony, were often resorted to from sheer necessity by the best mothers. The reviewer says that "laudanum and quack soporifics are given to young infants to keep them quiet; gin, also, is a constant

remedy in teaspoonful doses to ward off convulsions"—a medicine always sure to be within reach of a certain class of Victorian matrons—"the finest thing in life for keeping their little stomachs warm and free of wind." But in cases of labour brandy is the sovereign panacea for assuaging the pains, and writhing patients have been heard to direct the midwife, with true colonial instinct, "to run for a pint of burnt brandy, an' make me drink it whether I will or no." I believe myself, that if a registry of births and deaths had been taken in the pastoral days of Port Phillip, infant mortality would not have been found above the general average; but the great discovery which diminished shepherds, spreading scab and disease amongst sheep, had a like effect amongst servants and nurses, and, superadded to the causes already enumerated, produced premature decease amongst children and infants.

I am firmly persuaded that the climate of Victoria is fine and salubrious. I will not go the length of doing violence to metaphor by asserting that it would warrant one "in sleeping out under a gum-tree," unless he lay down with the intention of enjoying uninterrupted repose until the day of judgment, but it is a climate, "taking it for all in all," which admits of as much open air work, recreation, and enjoyment, as any other I ever experienced. A really fine day in Victoria gives one a sort of enchanted feeling, as if he could subsist on the glorious air and light alone, without resorting to coarse material mundane diet; and although the sun may be at 110 deg. in the shade, it rarely ever strikes one down by its intensity. In other countries, in the same parallel of latitude, a mid-day sun dare not be encountered without an umbrella, yet in Victoria a man may ride, walk, or work during the fiercest focus of the blistering orb without any danger, and with little inconvenience; while in the evening

or midnight hours there is never any of that sweltering heat almost invariable in regions occupying a similar position in the temperate zone. I am free to admit, however, that it is rarely, if ever, favoured with those soft, limpid, glistening, lukewarm showers of which there are some rare traditional records over in Britain. In Victoria, a squall rushes up, and bang bursts the cloud, without sign or warning, disgorging itself with all the raw rancour of a Polar winter for a term, when it breaks off as suddenly, giving place to smiles of genial sunshine, as if the untrained elements were unequal to the graduated transitions of more mature countries. However, even this peculiarity is undergoing a quick, certain, and agreeable mutation, corresponding with the settlement of the country. Rains are becoming more equably diffused over the seasons, and hot winds are being gradually driven back into the interior by the increased humidity of the climate, which is easily accounted for by the increase of cultivation and agriculture, causing the rains and moisture to percolate through the soil instead of running off the surface, thus keeping the atmosphere cool and comfortable by a regular process of evaporation. And this effect is immensely enhanced by the millions upon millions of water-holes spread over the colony in the several diggings, which fill with water during the winter season, and contribute largely to the general humidity throughout the remainder of the year: a result most sensibly felt not only in the atmosphere, but in the soil; for stations which, in the early days, had to be abandoned during the summer from the utter dearth of water, can at present be occupied the whole year round, and diggings which could not be worked formerly in the dry season, for want of the same element, possess it now in perpetual abundance. I would, therefore, impress upon those curious and investigating people who abound in the

British Isles, the necessity of paying Victoria an early visit if they desire to revel in the abandon of hot winds, for I conceive their last appearance may be anticipated at no distant season.

If I were a selfish or querulous individual, I might, perhaps, be justified in complaining that the dry and exhausting nature of the climate was accountable for the Oxford grey complexion of my hair, and the crow's-feet which have crept about the corners of my eyes during my sojourn in Victoria; but I harbour no emotions of grudge for those untimely developments, which I do think will also be modified by the anticipated seasonal changes in store. I sincerely trust that like modifications may attend the influence of climate on the fair sex, who, it would be uncandid to deny, at present appear to be unduly affected by it. There can be no doubt—nor is there any amongst my numerous discerning acquaintances in the colony—that all ladies, but in a much greater degree ladies in the marriage state "who love their lords," are lamentably susceptible of the encroachments of agedness. I have in many instances seen lovely, blooming young creatures, the incarnations of health and perfectibility, whose physical elasticity suffered deplorable impairment while carrying the heir of the house in their arms, and who became unfitted for lighter gaieties of society, while in years they were little in advance of well-grown girls. Victoria, whatever in future times it may become, is not just yet a climate for developing mellow beauties of the "fat, fair, and forty" category—at least, I have not seen any of them amidst a chaos of "new ruins;" and, always an advocate for considerable disparity in the ages of betrothed couples, I would the more strenuously recommend it in matrimonial alliances in Victoria.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Introduce Pisé Building—Its Cheapness and Utility—Popular Curiosity and Satisfaction—Hot Winds—Black Thursday—The Dust Nuisance—Its insinuating Character—Futility of attempting to keep it under by Water-carts in Melbourne—Signs of the Times—Public Balls—The Mayor's Fancy-dress Ball—The Mongrel Dresses—The departing Scene—Effect on the Pastry Trade—Mistakes of the Conductors—Losses of Wearing Apparel—The Queen's Arcade—The opening Ball there—Beauty of Melbourne Women—The Arcade a partial Failure—A Description of the Concern—The Antipodean Tattersall's described—The Curiosity it engendered—Curious Speculations—Charity an Exotic in the British Isles and Colonies—Magnificent Ball at the Tattersall Establishment—An utter Failure as a profitable Speculation—An overground Edition of the Thames Tunnel—A Peep at the Ball on Emerald Hill—Amenities of the Ball-room—Sad Reverses in Bird-cage Walk.

EIGHT or ten days' sojourn in Melbourne decided me on postponing my digging tour until the approach of the ensuing rainy season, as I was given to understand there would be a decrease of operations on the gold-fields during the dry season; besides which, long pedestrian journeys under a hot sun before I became at all acclimatised, did not appear to me a judicious or comfortable proceeding. Having come to this determination, I cast about in my mind for some active and, if possible, profitable mode of employing myself in the mean time. From the prohibitory price of bricks or good building stones, the great scarcity, and consequently dearness, of lime, the extremely absurd rates of skilled and unskilled labour, I bethought me that a cheap, hasty, and tolerably

substantial style of building would be a very lucrative occupation; and in furtherance of this idea, I went in search of a central block of ground in the city, with the view of initiating pisé work, as it is called, the materials of which (loam and earth) were to be had everywhere on or near the surface, and which not only does not require the employment of expensive skilled labour, but is capable of being put out of hand in quantities more than quadrupling the work of the most expert bricklayer. It is susceptible of the neatest finish, being peculiarly suitable to a warm climate, as it is extremely cool in summer, and comfortably warm in the cold season. But if the materials are not properly admixed and tempered and thoroughly rammed, so as to prevent the possibility of interstices, houses built in this manner become, after a short time, intolerable, from the quantities of bugs and other vermin which insinuate themselves into them, and then honeycomb the walls from side to side, rendering extirpation impossible, except by resorting to entire demolition. This style of building, as well as the adobé, I first saw in Southern California, where I became satisfied of its economy and utility. I believe it was formerly resorted to in the southern counties of England for granaries and farm-buildings, and, when properly constructed, they were found to be very lasting. I shall not leave myself obnoxious to the imputation of book-making by giving a detailed and figurative account of the simple process, which I rather think will be found in most encyclopædias, lucidly explained and amply illustrated.

I entered into a treaty for leasing a half-acre of trust property in Great Lonsdale-street West for a term of twenty-one years, at a yearly rent of 500*l*., and commenced proceedings forthwith, pending the ratification of the lease by the trustees, resident in England. As stabling was very scarce

and livery high, I resolved on covering the whole area by a great horse repository, with all its appurtenances. I was my own architect, drawing out the plans, and laying down the lines of foundations. In a very few days I had several lines of frames at work, which had such a strange appearance, with strings of busy men ramming down the earth in them, that people from a distance round came to look on and laugh at the operation; however, when they came to see the frames unscrewed and removed, and the hard, solid, polished walls standing in their stead, like connected blocks of drab-coloured marble, their derision was soon changed into wonder, and the fame of the pisé went abroad on the wings of the wind. Next came groups of citizens in want of houses to examine the composition, picking with penknive-points to assure themselves of its thorough induration. Some came accompanied with their architects, and all seemed to be impressed with complete satisfaction as to the excellence of the innovating material. One class alone not only condemned, but attempted laughing it to scorn; however, finding that it grew in popularity, they cemented their contempt into hostility, and as the feeling went abroad among the masons that pisé would supersede brick and stone building, I got private information of certain intentions on the part of these tradesmen to come and demolish all the work I had erected. I thereupon communicated with the police authorities, and made it a *sine quâ non* that all the men engaged in my employment should live on the premises, prepared to resist any such attempt. Their number, as well as other precautionary measures, I suppose it was that protected me, for there was no attack, which I apprehended all the more, as I ascertained that brick-burners and quarrymen made common cause with the masons, in apprehension of what really soon began to follow—viz. a downward tendency on the skilled labour market,

and a decline in the price of bricks, and such-like building material.

But although everything went on well and smoothly, the public looked for some further assurance of the practicability of pisé building. The series of walls, external and internal, dividing and subdividing at varying thicknesses, were, to be sure, standing over the entire area at an elevation of six feet —the height of the first set of starts—with the gate-posts, door-cases, and window-frames all neatly and securely built in, yet there still lingered a doubt, or difficulty, as to the feasibility of carrying round the second course; "frames might be made to stand on the ground well enough, but it was a horse of another colour to perch them on top of the walls." Great was the curiosity to see this operation, and so great was the crowd of spectators, that it embarrassed the movements of the workmen. However, the suspense was of limited duration; one set of frames were soon completed, and as they came down, leaving another layer of composite marble standing plumb above the first, with scarcely the semblance of a seam, a shout of triumph arose, and the last bilious-looking, cavilling sceptic gave in his adhesion.

Next day I had the honour, "by command," of an interview with the governor, who was all along aware of my operations, and cognisant of the adaptability of pisé building to stores and dwellings; but after a good deal of general conversation, he came to refer specially to my project, of which he highly approved, but with his own peculiar suave significance he suggested "that I did not seem altogether to appreciate the extent and full effect of the wet season in Victoria as it bore upon my undertaking," giving me to understand that he conceived I should have commenced operations on a stone foundation. I understood the force and effect of his suggestion, but I could not bring myself to adopt it at

the stage to which I had advanced. It was not indolence or want of moral courage that restrained me, but a reason even more insuperable than either—a want of capital to undo what I had done, and commence anew. I had made a start, calculating on reaching the point of reimbursement with the means in hand; but as my calculations would have been altogether subverted by the other course, I preferred taking my chance of the wet season to running a-muck with certain embarrassment. So on I proceeded, with such steady success that I was offered several private contracts, and I was asked to contract for the erection in pisé of a new military barrack in Melbourne, and a Government camp at an adjacent goldfield.

The summer advanced as my works progressed, and such a summer as was rarely experienced: hot wind succeeded hot wind, each exceeding its precursor in the violence of its paroxysms and the intensity of its temperature, and, what was still worse, in the choking density of its accompanying dust-clouds. Old colonists looked grave, and gave ominous hints of another visitation similar to the awful Black Thursday, when the whole country was in a blaze, and where the atmosphere was not flame, rational beings were obliged to prostrate themselves to preserve animation by sucking scarcely respirable air beneath the murky columns of hot smoke, the brute creation, burning alive as they stood, lowing and bleating in the pitiable anguish of animal stupidity. It was a truly awful day, when thick green forests were burned up into black, unsightly skeletons, while the loveliest vegetation was scorched into snuff, and the crust of the earth was baked into a brittle cake. Even on the plains and open downs the herbage was singed brown, and panting cattle gasped in the agony of collapse on the crackling sod, or staggered, under the natural instinct of life, for preserva-

tion to the pools and water-holes, which emitted sheets of steam as their tribute to the dreadful visitation. The energy and ingenuity of man were sorely taxed on that frightful day, and their utmost exercise often failed to save the farm-yard and the homestead from the devouring element. I have heard many, many tales of the appalling horrors of those awe-inspiring hours, but I avow with sincerity, while I believe them implicitly, I am deterred from narrating them, by the apprehension that they would be regarded as manufactured exaggerations, so far are they beyond what I conceive to be the utmost stretch of untravelled imagination. I heard, amongst other simpler occurrences, that his excellency the governor, who was then on a country tour, was constrained to fly for refuge, with his small train of attendants, to a neighbouring lake, and remain on horseback almost aswim in the water for several hours, while the conflagration was raging round the margin of the lake.

I heard all the particulars of this day, which will be historical in the annals of Victoria, when I first arrived, and if I then swallowed them *cum grano salis*, I became a firm believer in their fullest and most terror-striking features from the terrific bursts of roasting granulated atmosphere which I experienced in 1853 in the city of Melbourne. Following the general example, I tied my head in a veil during those visitations, and thus baffled the drifting stones and pebbles; but if I had sewed it up in a pillow-case, I believe the finer dust would have found its way into the lungs, leaving enough in the cavities of the mouth to supersede the necessity of tooth-powder; and I remember, when stripping in the evening of the first memorable "brick-fielder," that I felt an involuntary pang of horror, thinking that the sharkskin aspect of my legs was the incipient symptom of elephantiasis.

It was only a momentary apprehension, however; and my next emotion was one of wonder at the close coat of gravelly mail in which they were encased. I felt curiously, and I appeal to those who in that year were encased in similar teguments, whether it would not strip the knuckles if they were rasped over it incautiously. The rest of the body did not suffer to the same extent, but it was still sufficiently scaly to "excite the especial wonder" of unsophisticated lime-juicers. The ears, of course, got pauged with balls of dust, and streamlets of coagulated mud trickled down the cheeks from the eye-corners until they lost themselves in the forest of beard at the lower extremity.

There is no contrivance which will entirely repel the insinuations of the fine floury powder which is carried in these dust-storms. The closest-fitting doors or windows, overlapped at their opening with list, or caulked with cotton, are insufficient to exclude it. You will find on the sashes and window-frames a powder so perfectly impalpable, that it stirs like fluid when it is touched, resembling quicksilver in its elusiveness. It enters freely into bookcases, wardrobes, and cupboards of the best construction, even finding its way to the works of the tightest-cased clocks and watches; in fact, nothing short of hermetically sealed cases can escape its intrusiveness, and so omnipresent is it, that all the senses become infected with a species of gravel complaint, as if everything susceptible of touch, taste, smell, sight, or feeling was seasoned with sand and excelled in grittiness. Ladies have a busy time of it in cleansing their velvets and laces, their silks and their satins, after a hot wind; but how those large drapery establishments manage which stand with open doors throughout its entire continuance I never have been able satisfactorily to find out, for, although their shops of a

hot wind day look as if they were filled with drab-coloured fog, the next morning every piece and pattern appear as clear and as fresh as if they came from the factory.

I have known a hot wind to continue without intermission for three days and three nights, but most generally they set in between eight and ten in the morning, continuing in violent gusts and squalls until the approach of evening, when a lull first supervenes, followed by a cool south wind, issuing from a dark embankment of cloud which rises along the southern horizon, and at a proper altitude discharges a deluge of rain, which changes like magic the aspect of nature, and imparts vigour and joyousness to languid wretches who were panting in parched air for several hours. If hot winds in the earlier days of the colony were attended with more smoke, since the digging era the deficiency in that respect has been most amply compensated by the vast increase of dust consequent on the multiplicity of roads and tracks which now penetrate the Bush, alternating from winter mud to summer dust. There was not in 1833 or 1834 any attempt made by the corporation to keep the dust under by means of watering-carts, which, in my opinion, would have been perfectly futile, even if that body had only to compete with the dust of strictly city creation, for the greater number of the streets were in a state of nature; and even those that could boast of strips of macadamisation had much wider margins of natural track on either side of them that generated clouds of dust beyond the capability of the best and most liberal corporate preventatives. But when the streets become entirely macadamised, the trottoirs flagged over, and the roads into the interior metalled throughout, I conceive the perfect watering of the Melbourne streets will be quite practicable.

In some of the city blocks the shopkeepers subscribed

large funds and organised a localised system of water-carts, hoping to abate the nuisance, and to demonstrate by their success the utter sloth and uselessness of a tax-creating corporation. However, their laudable enterprise turned out a ludicrous failure. Their application of hydropathy proved no better than a quack administrative, for, so far from allaying the dust generally, they could not at best keep lanes the width of their wheel tracks more than fitfully open. The machines moved along in the clouds of dust, only dimly discernible, more like the creations of mirage than material contrivances employed in doing the dirty work of a great city. On more than one occasion I was curious enough to follow close at the tail of one of these hydropathic engines to observe their effect, but I came to the conclusion that it would be nearly as practicable to quench a simoom in the great desert of Sahara with a watering-pot as to keep a sectional strip of Melbourne damp and clear during the fury of a hot wind by the dribbling of a few water-carts. It was alleged, whether in waggery or earnestness I know not, water being a very marketable commodity at the time, that on favourable occasions the drivers used to whirl off in a cloud and dispose of the fluid for household purposes, and return to their posts muffled up in another cloud without exciting the suspicion of their employers; but whether it was dejection at the inefficacy of the undertaking, or chagrin at the detection of the cheat, the struggle was abandoned, after a very brief campaign.

Another of the signs of the times, indicative of social progress, which came under my observation about this period, was a growing epidemic for private parties and public balls amongst the later settlers. Private réunions were generally too select, not so much from a paucity of parties desirous of participating in pleasures of good society, as from the ex-

pense, the difficulty, and the danger of returning home in the dark from these social festivities. Very few, indeed, kept their own vehicles, or would incur the expense of hiring carriages on those occasions, and if a carriage was employed, the great probability was that in the very places where they would be most required the state of the track would compel the passengers to alight, and trudge through the mire. The general practice, therefore, and the one most adopted, from the species of colonial chivalry associated with it, was for ladies and gentlemen to set out for the scene of pleasure in good strong boots, carrying their dress-shoes in bundles, starting in good time, so as to get over the trying places before darkness set in, and making a hall toilet of the nether extremities on their arrival. As to the return, it gave rise to no embarrassing anticipations; even if there was a wet souse or an awkward tumble, like the incidents of a fox-hunt they were made the subject of glorification and merriment, and supplied food for highly-coloured paragraphs in the succeeding home letter.

The first ball of a semi-public character, or the one which first attracted my attention, perhaps from the circumstance of getting a free invitation, was one given by the outgoing mayor, J——n T——s S——h. There were numbers advertised, immediately after its announcement, to come off in close succession, but the mayor's ball was the great social topic of the day, because it was known that he was wealthy, and so ambitious of display, that no expense would prevent him from endeavouring to obtain the very acme of grandeur and magnificence; and what gave the greater éclat to the affair was its being announced to come off in the Queen's Theatre, of which he was the proprietor. He lavished large sums in boarding over the pit uniformly with the stage, and decorating the entire establishment in as attractive a manner as possible. The sums he expended, seeing the enormous

cost of materials and the rates of tradesmen's wages, made people even accustomed to display at home hold their breaths in astonishment. The estimate for confectionary alone, which leaked out, was positively startling, and such was the demand for pastrycooks—a peculiarly scarce class at the time—that some marriages were said to be postponed from the impossibility of procuring wedding-cakes.

I omitted to state it was a fancy dress ball, and glorious was the harvest reaped by tradesmen in preparing the endless variety of costumes, as no branches of the great home outfitting establishments in that line had been then started in Melbourne, and glorious also in their grotesque absurdity were the mistakes which tradesmen made in their utter ignorance, and costumiers in their bald historical reminiscences, in endeavouring to get up the dresses of particular eras, or to revive the fashions of particular reigns. The most flagrant anachronisms of costume were innocently perpetrated, and national habits were so impartially mongrelised, that true hidalgos sported the Oriental turban, while Turkish sultans might have been mistaken for Spanish bandits in steeple-crowned sombreros. In like manner, Catherine of Aragon or Elizabeth of England were not distinguishable from each other by any peculiarities of personal array, nor could the nicest historical analysis make the most remote guess as to whether the lank gentleman in regal habiliments was Louis Quatorze, the Merry Monarch, or Ferdinand of Spain; Mary Queen of Scots might have passed for Diana Vernon, and the lady who undertook to impersonate Kathleen O'More would have made an excellent physical representative of Brian Born. There were several Ladies of the Lake, Merry Maids of England, and Irish lasses, however, who came much nearer the mark, and in any attire would have had their admirers, while sailors, diggers, bushrangers,

and stockriders, dressed to perfection, sustained their characters and played their parts most admirably.

The governor and suite honoured the assembly with his presence, and the mayor and mayoress enacted their parts as hosts with a degree of hospitable earnestness above all praise. The arrangements were all most admirably carried out. There was abundance of the choicest rarities and delicacies, and if some few jolly souls exceeded the limits of propriety in their potations, they committed no trespass in their demeanour or decorum. But the part of the entertainment—if I could graphically describe it—which would read best in description, was the out-door scene at the breaking-up. The motley mob of vehicles—heavy britschkas, light American buggies, gigs, tax-carts, horse-drays, and bullock-waggons—presented such a varied and ludicrous assemblage of conveyances as perhaps never was brought together before, or ever will be again. An Irish funeral, in the early part of the century, where the person going to his last home was popular and respected, was spectacular enough in its way, exhibiting strange-looking and primitive carriages, furnished in a style rather suggested by comfort than effect, but my impartial judgment, in so far as my recollection serves me, compels me to yield the palm to the exhibition at the front of the Queen's Theatre in Melbourne on the morning after the mayor's ball. The vehicles and animals were all jammed together in inextricable confusion. There was no earthly use in calling for Mr. So-and-so's carriage, or Mr. Such-a-one's waggon, because, in the first place, neither carriage nor waggon could move; and, in the next place, as most of the conveyances were hired for the occasion, the drivers were utterly ignorant of the names of their employers. In nine cases out of ten, therefore, the only alternative was for the most daring and discerning heroes of each party to commence

a series of explorations over horses' necks, bullocks' backs, through open and over close carriages, until they found something answering to the object of their search, when such scenes of lifting, pulling, jumping, and screaming ensued as might be supposed to attend the crossing of a rapid river on broken drift ice. Many settled down—some in deep repose—before all were accommodated and a general start effected, and an appreciable per-centage of the dispersed party found themselves, on being roused up, at the doors of distant houses in no wise resembling their own. Some lethargic town-people were carried into the country, and many denizens of the Bush were sulkily summoned to alight in the lanes of Collingwood, and have their b——y, or perhaps blood-shot, eyes unpleasantly apostrophised for doubting the correctness of the delivery—mistakes proceeding from that glorious sense of indifference which scorns to irritate the feelings by simple inquiry. There is no record as to how families were restored to their homes, but the "Lost," and "Mislaid," or "Taken by Mistake" advertisements which teemed in the morning papers for some time afterwards, proved that however quickly persons turned up, personal property was slow in answering even to the luring influence of rewards. I lost a reversible paletot, but picked up a cape, in which I found a dingy silver thimble and a most unique love-letter.

A few days after the mayor's ball there was another grand affair at a new establishment, the "Queen's Arcade," given in celebration of its opening, at which the governor was also present, and a great but mixed crowd, the majority of whom were townsfolk. It was not a fancy dress ball, nevertheless it was a ball in which fanciful dresses of the most outré description abounded, particularly amongst the ladies, many of whom, in their ambition to figure in low dresses, ran into

that extreme of nudity about the region of the shoulders which opera-dancers delight in extending to their legs. As far as nakedness was concerned, the effect could not be excelled.

Leaving every beauty free, to sink or swell as Heaven pleases,

seemed to be the motto under which the majority of the nymphs attired themselves, but when these undulations became exaggerated by violent exercise, and crimson nature began to exude perspiration, I, for the first time in my life, thought of questioning the propriety of Norah Creina's floating costume, wondering, in my heresy, if the artless creature was acquainted with the properties of sal-volatile or eau-de-Cologne, or if she carried a smelling-bottle about her when she danced an Irish jig.

"The fun grew fast and furious" in the Queen's Arcade at a very early hour of the evening, for the lazy figures and gliding graces of modern Terpsichorean invention had not yet acquired fame and popularity in the colony. Jigs, reels, flings, and country-dances were, therefore, the order of the night, and danced with a ceaseless vigour, too, that quickly begot a stifling steam, compounded of animal exhalations, vile scents, and lamp smoke, which rendered the whole place a large vapour-bath. His excellency retired early, but with the majority I waited till a late hour, as a good system of ventilation was subsequently discovered, good viands, and fluids, too, abounded, and, more attractive still, the girls, in spite of their dresses, were of the class one could not "leave behind him," for I will say and maintain that Melbourne, notwithstanding its disproportionate amount of female population, contains a larger proportion of fine women and pretty girls than any city of its size on the globe, and no matter how they may fade before the influences of climate, their

ranks never present a gap, for angelic recruits ever press forward, sweetening and assuaging the conflicts in the great "battle of life."

The Queen's Arcade itself was a bold, and, I regret to say, rather an unsuccessful speculation—unsuccessful, principally, from the constraint of position, being too far removed from those haunts and avenues where the bulk of the population love to congregate. Nothing could have been more agreeably conformable to such a climate as that of Victoria, or to a city subject to such visitations as Melbourne, wanting as it was in all those out-door arrangements that tend to counteract the disagreeabilities of dust and mud. An arcade in the drenching rains of the wet season is most likely to be the locale where ladies will stroll dry-shod from shop to shop, or lounge along with attendant bearers during the prevalence of a squall, where matrons will air their families, or dilettanti swells after office hours "puff their weeds." Again, in the summer season, where is one so likely to "knock up against people worth knowing" as in the well-ventilated shade of a well-arranged covered-on-foot thoroughfare, where hot winds are not allowed free ingress, and fountains can be made to create a description of mechanical atmosphere. Such, I believe, were the ruminations which induced the projectors of the Queen's Arcade to embark their capital in the undertaking. Had they augmented the amount to a figure enabling them to purchase property for its site either running out of Great into Little Collins-street, or even out of Great into Little Bourke-street, I am perfectly assured it would have been a "decided hit," but its unapproachable remoteness almost suddenly collapsed it after a start of unprecedented promise.

The Queen's Arcade runs from Great Lonsdale-street into Little Bourke-street, covering longitudinally a space

of three hundred and sixty feet by a breadth of thirty-three feet. The central footway—which is boarded—occupies about one-third of the area, the other two-thirds being equally allotted to two ranges of neat little shops on either side. The roof is a rounded one, the light being admitted by a range of several windows between the eave and the roof of the shops. The principal front is in Great Lonsdale-street, where two handsome two-story shops, connected by a fine archway, denote the entrance. The windows render it sufficiently lightsome in daytime, and a row of splendid chandeliers illuminate it in the evening. There was an immense run for shops at its first opening, and the novelty of the thing attracted the multitude. Like many novelties, however, it ceased to draw after a limited run, and from being a hive of competitive traders, it became, I may say from end to end, the leviathan emporium of an associated Jewish confraternity, who have furnished it in that heterogeneous fashion which constitutes one of the distinguishing talents of the Israelite community—delf, dolls, pictures, cigars, old clo', jewellery, toys, perfumery, bad stationery, infirm musical instruments, with a blank office in a central position, where money is advanced on title-deeds or other valuable property, and bills are cashed at a rate that would lead a novice to suppose it was the principal and not the interest that was stopped in lieu of discount consideration. At the opening I was given to understand the rate of lettings guaranteed 50 per cent. interest on the outlay; but even since its decadence I believe it yields a handsome per-centage, which I feel assured will be steadily augmented as the circumference of the city extends its circle.

Parallel with the Arcade, but farther eastward, another stupendous establishment was fomented at the same time by an enterprising individual, whose powers of suasiveness

were so irresistible that he over-induced some plethoric capitalists to commence an enormous horse repository, which took Tattersall's for its title. It was the idea of a sanguine man who had the funds of other parties to carry out his plans, for at the time, and under the prospects, I do not believe that an individual could be found in Victoria possessing at once the capital and the assurance that it would fructify in such an investment. This may sound queerly, coming from one actually engaged at the identical time in a similar speculation, but there was this distinctive difference between us, that my calculations were restricted within the limits of 5000*l.*, while the other, it was well known, could not be completed under twelve times the amount.

The space allotted for its site was just the double of that of the Queen's Arcade—viz. 66+360 feet—the front to Great Lonsdale-street being entirely occupied by a large three-story hotel, perforated in its centre by a colossal gateway, which led into a covered ride, twenty feet wide the entire length, and terminating in a corresponding gateway at the other extremity, where offices and a fine veterinary establishment were erected. On either side of the ride were a a line of carriage-stands, with openings at given intervals, and inside them the stables, alternated by rows of halter-stalls and loose boxes, capable of accommodating close upon two hundred horses. Over the stables were haylofts and granaries, all covered by a corrugated iron roof, at an altitude of thirty-five feet, admirably constructed for admitting light and ventilation. At the Little Bourke-street end a large additional space was superadded for forges, infirmaries, and harness-rooms, and when it was sufficiently advanced for the inspection of the public, it really impressed every visitor with wonder and admiration, far exceeding, in the spaciousness and grandeur of its arrangements, either Tattersall's, Lucas's, or Dycer's.

While the minor finishing touches were going on, such as the painting and decorating, there was no restriction to admission, and it soon became the lion of the city; crowds upon crowds, gentle and simple, male and female, old chum and lime-juicer, Britisher and foreigner, kept rolling through, uttering aloud their general commendations, and indulging in their various private speculations as to the several other uses to which it could be rendered applicable on emergency, reminding me of the critiques on the great room erected by the Dublin corporation in anticipation of the memorable visit of George IV., which became one of the special metropolitan sights afterwards. A humorist of the era used to relate that visiting it on one occasion, he observed three stern-looking tribunes of the people stalking around it, and trying the echoes in various tones, who eventually came to the unanimous conclusion that it would be "a magnificent room for a public meeting," while a musical gent, who at the same time had been testing its capacity for sound, thought equally well of it for concert purposes; shortly after, a troop of buoyant beautiful girls entered, and, circling it at a gallop, declared, in simultaneous ecstasy, "that it would be the most delightful of rooms for a race ball;" but one of a sober-looking pair of servant-girls, overcome with a glow of genuine admiration, formed somewhat of a different estimate, for she half-screamed to her companion, clapping her hands in rapture, "Oh, Nancy dear, wouldn't this be a grand loft for drying clothes?"

Before the bright sunburst of truly national feeling which broke through the clouds of British character at the wailing call of Crimean suffering and destitution, it used to be practically admitted by the devotees, and remarked by the press, that charity was an exotic in the sea-girt isles, never appearing like a true native spirit in the moment of exigency, or answering to the ordinary call of supplication, but waiting,

in a mixed mood of coquetry and coyness, to be invoked by the charms of music or the allurements of gastronomy before she appeared upon the scene. Orkney fishermen might starve in a dearth of herrings, Manchester operatives might exercise themselves in accommodating short time to short commons, and hereditary bondsmen raise a keen howl over the departed sowls of their darling praties, without moving the bowels of cold Charity's compassion, or getting her name to a subscription-list; but when benevolence came to be associated with a ball, a concert, or a public dinner, beneficent sprites, ministering angels, and hungry philanthropists rushed forward in emulous troops to disburden themselves of contributions at the ball-room door or on the dinner-table. Poor Lord Dudley Stuart never could have sustained his adopted refugees without the annual Polish ball, nor could the progeny of St. Patrick escape destitution if the yearly dinner was discontinued; for music and mutton it is that opens the most tenacious hands to "melting charity."

Another type of this strange epidemic visited Melbourne at the time I write about. Every undertaking was inaugurated, and all great enterprises were introduced to the public, through the medium of a ball. There were several which I need not mention, given to celebrate the openings of Protestant halls, temperance divans, and monster concert-rooms, but what Terpsichore had to do with stable-yards I never could divine or discover in the records of mythology or the chronicles of the Muses; yet the proprietors of Tattersall's, who had already burnt their fingers in bricks and mortar, unanimously resolved, before they could seek reimbursement in the way of business, that a further sum of immense magnitude should be expended in a ball of surpassing magnificence and brilliancy, and they actually went to the wanton expense of flooring over the entire area with grooved and tongued boards, lining the sides with acres of printed calico, and de-

corating the enormous roof with silken flags, streaming amidst a brilliant firmament of wax-lights, almost as countless as the celestial stars. Every appointment, every arrangement, was on a scale of corresponding sumptuousness. The governor, of course, was in attendance, and the company was as becomingly select as well could be, nor was there an occurrence to mar the magnificent success of this Sardanapalian festival, if I would except the escapade of a lot of newly-arrived Jews, who attempted to introduce some casino dances of Holborn manufacture; but after a few sharp jostles and collisions, these bejewelled snobs were quietly disposed of by the master of the ceremonies.

I lament to say, notwithstanding this auspicious event, that this magnificent establishment was an unmitigated failure from the commencement. A great endeavour was made to open it for trade with éclat and liberality, but it collapsed after a short trial, and remains to the present day little better than a new ruin—a gloomy region, which, like an over-ground edition of the Thames Tunnel, some few people visit from motives of curiosity, and some fewer people still, of the outside class, for the purpose of making short cuts to the haunts of active business. Its want of success is certainly not attributable to any abatement in the requirements for stabling, or any falling off in the traffic of horses, but, in my mind, is mainly owing, like that of the Queen's Arcade, to the remoteness and inconvenience of its position. Little Bourke-street, on which its southern terminus abuts, is, in the present day, the city head-quarters of the Chinese population, and the chiefs of the Mongol race have offered a large sum of money for the premises, as is conjectured for the purpose of opening a monster bazaar after the Eastern fashion. Such an institution would be a novel feature in Melbourne, and the general expectation is that the bargain will be perfected, as it would be better that the concern

should be somehow occupied than remain in its present gloomy and decaying state.

I cannot wind up this chapter more appropriately than by giving a bird's-eye glance at a ball given, I may say, at the door of my residence on the hill by the proprietor of the Emerald Hotel, in a large apartment just on the eve of being finished, and intended for an American bowling saloon. I turned in for an hour soon after its commencement, and was soon pounced upon by some of my lady neighbours in "Bird-cage Walk," who reversed the "rules of the room," as regards the enlistment of partners, and involved me in a maze of gyrations, of rushings and pushings, in which my heavier metal alone saved me from serious injury, though I got several severe punches between "wind and water." Gentlemen danced pipes in mouth, and many of the fair syrens carried their tumblers in hand, but prudentially imbibing their contents, like kangaroos, who pouch their young on the approach of danger. As the wind-up threatened to be a rough-and-tumble affair, I made my conge at an early hour; but I heard my neighbours tumbling home long after daylight. Before removing from the "Walk," as a faithful chronicler I feel bound to remark that the amorous ardour of the digging Lotharios cooled down sadly by absence, for they treated their partners so literally with "unremitting kindness," that the fair creatures, after consuming their jewellery and all their unstained tabinets, were driven to prey upon their pet birds, which were all disposed of except a solitary magpie, who restricted himself to the tune of "There is na luck about the house." I was forcibly reminded of the "one step from the sublime to the ridiculous," as I saw those wretched girls trudging through the mud in broken boots and dirty muslin, who a few weeks before rolled on carriage-cushions in satin shoes and brocaded silks.

CHAPTER XIX.

The new Residence—The Ménage—Our Doctor Neighbour—His Signboard—The Fate of my Pisé Speculation—Cast about for a new Calling—American Merchants and Yankee Notions—Sour Flour—Tombstones—Down East Champagne—Dangers attending American Champagne—Speculate in a Lot of unredeemed Passengers' Luggage—Good Fortune—Trade with a German Jew—His Grievous Disappointment—His Torture—His ingenious Device—Watches of that Day in Victoria—The Union Hotel started—The Style of Management—The Triumph of the French Cuisine—Immense Income—The Drawbacks—The main Cause of its Failure—Jealousy of Old Chum Bank Directors—Irish Jews the worst of the Species—The Criterion Hotel—Its elaborate Finish in every Department—Great Gymnastic Skill of its Barmen—Its numerous Appurtenances—The Mode of Living there—A Digger's Apostrophe to a would-be Swell—The 4th of July at the Criterion—Yankee Orators—Poets and Speechifiers—Criterion goes down as the American Tide goes out—The Rush to Peru.

I SAID in my last chapter I was about removing from "Bird-cage Walk," and, as well as I can recollect, within a week from the day of the Emerald Hill ball, I was established in the new solitary house I have so often before alluded to. I took it, as the phrase goes, "on my own hook," but made a sort of sub-letting arrangement with the W——ds, which induced them to undertake the management of the household, occupying by themselves some rooms apart at the rear, while three professional friends came to live with me in the front. We made ourselves exceedingly comfortable as the times went. Each furnished his own room according to his own fancy; and while we paid a weekly sum to the W——ds for board of the best description, in-

cluding "the delicacies of the season," I looked after the fluids, which I selected with care, and levied for *pro rata*. I well remember purchasing bottled ale and porter, which readily fetched by *wholesale* 22s. per dozen at my arrival, for 14s. the single case, and excellent Château Margaux for 12s. (taking a dozen cases), which could not be put free on board at Bordeaux for double the sum.

Fish, at the end of 1853, also became comparatively abundant, and vegetables were luxuries in which moderate men could rationally indulge on feast days about the same period. So that, with the exception of fowl, which still soared in the seventh heaven of exorbitance, we managed to "rough it" rather comfortably, seeing a few choice guests now and then, who wondered at our excellent management. Being at a distance from the throng, we indulged in our ease of evenings, and, crowned in Albanian or Turkish caps and picturesque dressing-gowns, we lolled in our verandah, or stretched on the green sward, sipping our coffee or swilling our claret. For some time we were suffered to revel unobserved in this species of luxurious indolence of evenings, but after a while the fame of our circle spread abroad, and young ladies from the neighbouring "hill" shaped their twilight strolls in the direction of our residence, declaring that it commanded "the most delicious view of the bay;" to the very evident disgust of the envious young gentlemen accompanying them, who met the assertion with unceremonious contradictions, twirling their moustaches fiercely at our unoffending party, as if they intended spitting us on their pointed ends.

Without pretending to assign a cause for the movement, I have to remark that within two weeks after our settlement we began to attract a circle of residents around us; first a tent or two, then over a dozen of weatherboarded houses,

and before they were finished, and occupied, another batch were commenced. Our neighbours were not of the most recherché order, and the proprietors of the circumjacent property determined on squeezing the utmost penny out of the land, by crushing the new comers within a system of narrow lanes and alleys, into which the sun could only peep at its meridian, or the wind never thought of entering except in its most vagrant humour. We derived some slight consolation from the neighbourhood of a medical man, who was an agreeable man, and as such had the entrée of our establishment, but, like ourselves, he was disappointed and disgusted at the prospect growing up around us. We were all infinitely amused one evening, after returning from town, on reading a flaming signboard tucked up to the gable of his house, which he intended should announce his calling to the neighbourhood as "Surgeon and accoucheur," giving verbal orders to that effect to a local artist whom he employed. But, lo and behold! on the evening in question, as the antipodean Correggio was waiting for commendation and payment, he was astonished at seeing us all go off into convulsive fits of laughter as we contemplated his masterpiece, on which he described our professional friend as "Surgeon and auctioneer," giving, as his excuse, his positive assurance that the hammer was quite as respectable and profitable an instrument as the forceps.

My pisé project went on admirably during the interval since my last allusion to it; so much so, that I put on the roofing timbers and finished off one end in imitation of cut stone and cornice, to show the degree of perfection to which it could be carried. However, about this time I began to hear some whispers about defective title to the land, which induced me to take a legal opinion on the construction of

the will from which the trustees derived their powers. The opinion was decidedly unfavourable, and I was consequently advised to pause in my expenditure until the arrival of the instructions from England. Meantime, one of our hot wind visitations was followed by a torrent of rain, which continued falling without intermission for twenty hours, submerging all the lower grounds about Melbourne completely. I went naturally to visit my works, now all two story high, and not yet properly tied with rafters or flooring-beams. But they showed no symptom of suffering. The same night, however, a frightful storm arose, which blew down several new buildings in Melbourne and Collingwood, prostrating, too, an all but finished church at Richmond. I crossed over from the hill with very natural apprehension, but was rejoiced to find my works all standing. However, when the flood receded, I saw the force of Mr. Latrobe's suggestion, for it was quite evident that the base of the walls had been affected by the water.

It would have been an undertaking of considerable difficulty and very great expense to undermine and shore up the walls, which, if relieved at the time, could have been all saved and perfectly secured; but in consideration of the outlay, taken in connexion with the insecurity of my tenure, I left them to their fate until I could get assurance one way or the other; and while solid mason work in other quarters had to be razed to the ground from its tottering state, the pisé stood upright for some time. At length, after another storm of wind and rain, it began to resemble in some places the celebrated Campanile, or Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the following mail bringing intelligence "that the trustees had no authority to demise," having only powers to sell outright, I was obliged to abandon the project which had swallowed

up such sums of money, and before the end of the following winter, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, there was not a rack behind."

I did not, however, sit down to sigh and mope over the calamity; on the contrary, I took a cast in quest of some other employment or occupation pending the commencement of my book, and, by way of an interlude, I thought of trying my hand at some stroke of trading business. Seeing that barristers, doctors, and natural philosophers did not consider it *infra dig.* to add to their incomes by little trading "specs," I became reconciled to the resolution of trying to get back some of my pisé outlay by a respectable effort at peddling, as it was a pop beyond my ability to go into the mercantile line under the auspices of a store and counting-house. A sanguine acquaintance to whom I mentioned my intentions came down promptly with the recommendation of a "commission agency," as a vocation that would suit me to a certainty. "Look at the legion of muffs," he remarked, "who are living like fighting-cocks at the business. If you, with your experience, could not go to windward of the lot, I don't know you, that's all."

I felt, or pretended to feel, flattered at what was, no doubt, intended as good and complimentary advice, but with all my small talent for observation, I never acquired any proficiency in augering butter, probing bacon, sampling brandies, sorting sugars, or tasting cheeses. I was equally dull about flours, unable to distinguish between the Gallego, Chilium, or Adelaide articles in the absence of the brands; nor could I hazard a guess, in the raw state, between congo and bohea, mocha or Java. Even in the more familiar extracts, which came within the category of whiskies, I did not pretend to any delicacy of judgment without the agency of hot water and sugar. So that, with all the proverbial assu-

rance of my country, I was obliged to avow my incapacity for that favourite line of occupation, expressing a doubt, at the same time, that the flourishing condition of the numerous gentlemen engaged in it was altogether dependent on the bare margin of their commissions.

I had recourse to my friend L——n before coming to a definite determination; for, besides being a long-headed fellow, he had the personal experience of some months in trading and store-keeping. After a close chat, I became impressed with the conviction that even small trading—overdone in every department—was in a rotten and fictitious state just then, and I therefore made up my mind to be very cautious even in the narrow sphere of my transactions; for, like small craft, I was obliged to cruise close in shore, leaving the "vasty deep" to be navigated by vessels of large tonnage. Mr. L——n, although possessing abundant capital, had given up all speculation, confining himself solely to storing goods for importers, not one in a hundred of whom at the time had stores of his own. He got a large American connexion, and certainly his premises presented a most curious and endless variety of Yankee notions, many neat and ingenious in their way, but evidently got up for sale rather than utility, and evidently unsuited in their general style to the sturdy taste and genius of the Bull family, for, out of the interminable assortment which they brought into the market for diggings consumption, I think the only implement which came quickly into general use, and still maintains its ground, is the American axe. There may have been some little knick-knackeries, like twig brooms and nests of frail tubs, which, for the want of better articles, got into temporary domestic use, but, as they say themselves, "American fixins wouldn't go down nohow;" in broad proof of which, I may adduce the fact that, as a rule, the great

American houses did not take root in Melbourne. There are, to be sure, a few exceptions, but, on the whole, Yankee enterprise does not seem to thrive or go ahead in Victoria. The world-famous express house of Adams and Co. tried hard to secure a footing, but withdrew after a hard struggle. C—d—ll and T——n, representing a first-class Boston house, followed their example; and, if I deemed it necessary in support of my assertion, I could enumerate a long list of similar retreats.

Like the ports circling the shores of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, all these of the western hemisphere were swept clean of the accumulated refuse of years and crowded into Hobson's Bay; and I sometimes spent a wondering half-hour at Coles's or Raleigh's wharf in watching the discharge of lighters from the Yankee clippers, speculating on the possible uses to which many strange and fantastic articles could be applied, and listening to the outlandish guesses of the amazed wharf porters. Some flour came in for a season in thousands of tons, and was purchased at a nominal price by the local millers, who piled it in mountains in their open yards (at least one whom I could name did), dressing it off by degrees with sound Chilian brans, or grinding it up in large proportions with fine South Australian wheat, and getting 40*l.* and 50*l.* for this compound poison, the larger ingredient in which stood them little over one shilling in the pound. An appropriate sequence to these flour speculations, and in due conformity with the doctrine of cause and effect, came a large importation of tombstones, of different sizes and shapes, some perfectly plain, others with rough emblematic headings, capable of being intensified in ghastliness according to the taste of the purchaser, and a large proportion with skeleton inscriptions—"Sacred to the memory of , who departed this life on .

This tablet is erected by . Requiescat in pace"—from a prescient conviction that the rates of engraving in Victoria would impress even the most frantic mourners with impulses of economy. As a relief from these lugubrious reflections, I will mention another article of Yankee importation to the colony, "which," they said, "went off like all creation" in California. This was champagne of New England manufacture, and I can swear it "went off" in Mr. L——n's store like the Malakoff battery in its fiercest mood. It was an infernal aërated chemical preparation, forced under high-pressure power into bottles externally resembling those containing the genuine wine, but made fully twice as thick and as heavy, in order to resist the tremendous force of the explosive fluid, which was corked and fastened in with wires thick enough for an electric telegraph. The first banging explosion, Mr. L——n told me, caused infinite alarm, as the thick flint splinters rattled like those of a shell against the iron roof of the store; and others followed in such quick succession, the men were obliged to prostrate themselves to save their lives, for a direct wound would no doubt have been fatal. Taking advantage, however, of the first lull, they heaped bags of bran and corn over this American luxury, which should have been properly stored in a bomb-proof magazine.

I happened to look in after the danger was thus guarded against, but I heard many muffled reports, like the subterraneous rumbling of an earthquake. Mr. L——n sent his clerk to the importers, peremptorily demanding the instant removal of this sparkling beverage; but the cool response of these parties was, "to throw it out"—a permission which, like the resolution of "belling the cat," was found difficult of carrying into effect, from the extreme danger attending it. An enterprising Irish drayman, how-

ever, was at length found to take the contract of removal to the usual depository, which I have before alluded to. He was tolerably fortunate in the earlier part of his task, but as he turned off his load rudely a series of explosions, resembling platoon firing, followed, which caused his horse to run off and upset the cart, while Pat blasphemed all "'Merican shampayne" with as much devotion as the devil is said to anathematise holy water.

By way of trying my 'prentice hand in dealing, I attended some sales in the principal auction rooms. I recollect I purchased a lot of the superfluous outfit of T—d—n H—d—s; amongst other things, a portable forge, a lot of fishing-nets, a canteen, a lot of saddlery, and other miscellaneous articles, all of the very best manufacture. I bid for them on this account, and also because, from some unaccountable reason, there was very little competition. The forge and the fishing-nets (both new in the colony) I sold within a few days at a profit of over one thousand per cent., and I also realised a large profit on the other articles. Stimulated like a young tiger by the taste of blood, I increased my scale of operations, and in a day or two after bought at auction a lot of passengers' luggage, sold for non-payment of store rent. It was about the earliest sale of the sort in the colony, and attracted only a small attendance, the impression of course being that the owners considered the packages valueless, else they would not suffer them to be sacrificed. I happened to turn into the third-class auction room, where the sale came off, by mere accident, but seeing a pile of luggage going—going—gone—for a bagatelle that would scarcely buy the empty trunks and boxes, I became the purchaser for 22*l.* 10s.

There were fifty-three packages, large and small, in all, and as the business of the day was soon after concluded, I

proceeded to open a few and see what Providence had sent me. The first two contained nothing beyond some coarse, common-place clothing, very little worn; more than sufficient, however, to redeem their proportion of the purchase-money. But in the third, the first thing that presented itself was a roll of clean flannel, containing one dozen and a half of silver spoons and ten silver forks, and immediately underneath a salver, soup-ladle, and a small silver cruet. There was then a layer of excellent new shirts and stockings, and beneath all, embedded in the folds of a blanket, a very neat leather writing-case, with a card plate and a parcel of visiting cards amongst papers and letters, and a gold pencil-case, two rings, and a handsome seal in the secret drawers. The contents of this single trunk alone was worth more, twice told, than the sum I paid for the entire lot.

"It never rains but it pours," so in the next trunk, amongst some first-class wearing apparel, I found a rosewood box—a cross between a gentleman's dressing-case and a lady's work-box—which contained a miniature of a lady of the middle age, very good-looking, of foreign aspect; the picture was elegantly finished, and set in a slight gold frame. The box also contained a silver and gold watch, both by Dent; the latter a case hunting-watch, fully jewelled. This was too much for the numerous descendants of Moses by whom I was surrounded, and who were eagerly watching my proceedings, muttering curses on their own bad luck in the inverse ratio to my good fortune, as they saw with their own appreciating eyes that in two boxes alone I got property considerably over the value of 100*l.*, and four only had been opened out of the entire lot.

As I commenced forcing the next one—a substantial, well-secured box—I saw that the Jewish excitement was rapidly increasing, and I also overheard the delivery of a commission

to one of the brethren to make me a bid for the remainder. I could not catch the amount, but the sum he offered was 10*l.*, to which I replied by a mocking laugh, and was proceeding with my mallet and ripping chisel to unmask the hidden treasure, when I heard an advance from the rear of 5*l.* I was deaf as a post, and hammered away under a rapid succession of advances, which brought the bidding up to 70*l.*, without recovering my hearing. But as I commenced prising up the lid, a man rushed forward wildly, as if he held a reprieve staying an impending execution, and arrested my hand, exclaiming, in a broken, breathless manner, "Oh mine Got! you are von hard man mid your boxen—I vill give you von hunder for dem." A moment's reflection caused me to entertain the offer. It was too good a hedge to decline, and as I never was an especial favourite of Dame Fortune's, I said, "Done with you," to my German tempter, who seemed overpowered with this avalanche of luck, as he sat down on the half-gaping box, wiping away the globules of glistening joy from his brow with the cuff of his surtout. He beamed with all the pride of a monarch sitting in triumph on a newly-won throne, and seemed so abstracted running up, as it were, in his mind's eye the incalculable treasure he was master of, that I found some difficulty in reminding him that he had not handed me over "the von hunder pown."

When this was arranged, and he had come somewhat to himself, he was urged incessantly and importunately to inspect the box, and then offered a premium of 5*l.* for his bargain, which he declined. However, what he would not grant to solicitation, he yielded to his own burning suspense and curiosity, raising the lid with a very nervous hand. The precious contents were overlaid by a frousy counterpane, folded so as to adapt itself exactly to the opening, and on

removing it there was disclosed to the enraptured view the tools, trees, lasts, and lapstones, &c. &c., of a journeyman shoemaker, the smaller implements being wrapped up and tied with wax-end in a leather apron that had seen some service. The disclosure provoked a demoniacal laugh, in which my customer made a most ghastly effort to join, assailed, at the same time, by a tempest of ironical bids for "his precious stones."

Speculation now gave way to a spirit of fun and banter; however, after a considerable lapse, and under the mollifying influence of a copious shout of brandy, which a unanimous verdict of bystanders pronounced me "in honour bound to give," the now tremulous German commenced opening another package, which proved a "worser," being filled with an amount of stuff more provoking than all the evils in Pandora's box, without a rag of hope at the bottom. It contained an ill-assorted small set of second-hand kitchen utensils, stowed away with all the care, but not quite the neatness, of a bran-new set of surgical implements, the unavoidable spaces or vacancies being packed with dirty rubbers or filthy dish-clouts, neither sightly nor savoury. I am utterly at a loss to furnish any type of the savage disappointment evidenced by this unlucky speculator; the old one, of a tigress robbed of her cubs, would not be strictly analogous, nor am I satisfied with the hyæna balked of his chunk of meat—Shylock's rage would suit, if it did not emanate from thwarted revenge—so that I must content myself with the poor figure of a greedy Jew let into a bottomless bargain. He writhed like an eel on a gridiron under the unmerciful taunts of his brethren, ever and anon darting a terrible look of searching scrutiny at me, to try and discover whether I had "planted" him or not; and after a purgatorial ordeal of bantering, he summoned up resolution to hire a dray, on

which he removed his newly-acquired goods to his own premises.

After a lapse of some weeks I met my German friend, who, instead of approaching me with an air of hostility, greeted me in tones of smiling cordiality, relating in detail how he managed in his trying circumstances. In the whole lot—with one exception, on which he was sternly silent—there was nothing, he assured me, more attractive or valuable than ordinary wearing apparel; but he managed, nevertheless, to extract a good return, and more than reimburse himself, by an artful dodge of a truly Mosaic character—one eminently worthy of the exhaustless resources of Caucasian brains where place or profit is in prospect.

He informed me that he repacked the boxes and cases, separating them into divers and sundry small lots, and sent them to a leading auction mart, advertising them conspicuously as "unredeemed passengers' luggage, to be sold piecemeal, without reserve or guarantee," taking care, at the same time, to impart to them an air of travelled antiquity. He put in a majority of them small articles of plated ware of little value, which eager bidders took for granted were genuine silver, being brought such a distance, but as there was no delivery until after the conclusion of the sale, detection was impossible. He described gleefully to me how he got off several worthless silver watches by wrapping them carefully up in jeweller's wool and chamois leather bags, labelling one, "The Gift of a fond Mother to her darling Son;" another, "From Fanny to her adored Charles." Some he embalmed in Scriptural quotations for evangelical bidders, which, in his disjointed jargon, he described as "the von dam better an all plans. He try potry too, but no goot, no poit in Australy." Altogether, he admitted that he more than cleared himself by the speculation by the watch trick

alone, for in 1853 watches were scarce and excessively dear, those in the market being little better than the historical timepiece of Brian O'Linn, of which the traditional song of poor Tyrone Power relates:

> Brian O'Linn had no watch to put on,
> So he scooped him a turnip to make him a one;
> He popped a live cricket right under the skin—
> Faith, they'll think it is ticking, says Brian O'Linn.

And truly most of the watches of that day in the hands of the trade did very little more than tick. Nor was it unreasonable, on the part of the bidders in question, to imagine that they were more likely to procure good going watches from amongst parcels of maternal, paternal, and true lovers' gifts, than from the window-hooks of speculative traders.

Amongst the rapid advances which Melbourne made about this time in its emergence from the nomad state, I would be sadly wanting in all grateful and gratifying reminiscences if I neglected making favourable mention of two magnificent hotels, "The Union" and "The Criterion," which were started about the same time, the first by our courageous and enterprising countryman, T—d—n H—d—s, altogether on his own hook, the other by a Mr. M——ss, a travelled Yankee, who was taken by the hand and put forward by a small company of Melbourne capitalists, some of whom, although retired publicans, were weak enough to be ashamed of being ostensibly connected with hotel management. Not so, however, Mr. H—d—s, who, descended of an old family, noble in everything but the conventional christening, cradled in the lap of luxury, the familiar associate of the élite of the land, and long a member of "the first assembly of gentlemen in the world," forgot all false and foolish pride when he once made up his mind to embark in the speculation. He not only acknowledged himself the proprietor of the establish-

ment, but, like an hereditary Boniface, he was always bustling about to see that his patrons and customers were properly served and obligingly attended. A profound judge himself of everything constituting excellence in hotel management, he introduced all the luxurious articles of modern upholstery, and was the precursor apostle of the French cuisine in the Australian continent, having carried with him from Paris the chef of one of the greatest gourmands of the day, Lord Henry S—y—r, to whom, I was given to understand, he paid the exorbitant sum of three guineas per day. The establishment, in all its departments, was conducted with a degree of care and sumptuousness which, considering and contrasted with all previous efforts in that line, rendered it really and justly famous. The suites of rooms were grand, the attendance beyond all praise. The spacious salle à manger was thronged in its centre, and crammed in all its corners, at breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper. Every seat at the table d'hôte was engaged dozens deep in advance, and every private room and cabinet had its party or its vis-à-vis. Vulgar viands were eschewed by common consent. Julienne soup and potage à la reine superseded ox-tail and mutton broth; fricasees, vols-au-vent, and salmis de perdreaux cut out legs of mutton, sirloins of beef, and overgrown hams; while plum-pudding, together with apple-pie and cheesecake, ignominiously retreated before the irresistible advances of omelette soufflée and truffes au vin de champagne. The fluid revolution was no less extraordinary: the familiar foam of Guinness's stout or Bass's pale ale was regarded as an abomination, and the man would be little short of a hero who possessed sufficient moral courage to initiate his potations with anything short of champagne or sparkling Moselle, or who would subside into any still drinks that could be considered derogatory to their precursors; brandy-smashers,

gin-slings, sherry-cobblers, cocktails, spiders, thunder-and-lightning, phlegm-cutters, eye-openers, singarees, being only admissible at the bar or in the great room with the orchestra at the end, which filled every night with musical devotees, who applauded every performance in fresh nobblers.

Every one prophesied a rapid and leviathan fortune to the brave entrepreneur, for money flowed in in torrents in every channel; but the expenses were incalculable, for, independent of the enormous rent and the interest on the outlay, the amount swallowed up by the countless staff of overseers, clerks, and servants, was something too big for utterance or mention; and the positive impossibility of instituting a system of effective check on the numerous money-takers, who grew up in excess of all anticipative calculation, operated seriously against the absolute success of the enterprise. It would, however, have succeeded, in the face of all these drawbacks, only for the great original gangrene, which I have not yet alluded to, and to which I will, with my reader's leave, now advert to in the briefest possible way.

Mr. H—d—s (as I heard, and have reason to know) went into the business under the impression that the capital which he possessed would have been amply sufficient to carry it on, without being obliged to resort for accommodation to either bank or individual in any shape or way. It is not difficult, however, to suppose that a man, previously unacquainted with the details of business, should have erred in his calculations, particularly in Victoria, where no previous standard or estimate could be at all applied with correctness in any department of trade. The moment Mr. H—d—s became conscious of his difficulty he went direct, in a straightforward and aboveboard manner, to his bankers, and candidly placed before the directors his embarrassments, but as he satisfied them that the project was certain to be a most lucrative one,

they gave him the "cash credit" he required, and he went his way, rejoicing in the undeniable certainty of acquiring a rapid fortune, and shaping his transactions in accordance with the monetary facilities which, according to all the laws of mercantile honour, in the European acceptation of the term, he was justified in reckoning on. But lo and behold! when the first heavy gale of payments came round, the "credit," without any previous intimation, was refused, and Mr. H—d—s was driven into the tender mercies of a set of blood-sucking vampires, the principal and most relentless of whom was an Irish spirit dealer, who germinated in unenviable fame in his native land, but came out to blossom and bear fruit in the penal colony. And here let me say, of all Jews (usurers) save me from an Irish Jew. When once Paddy is inoculated with the virus of Moses, he out-Herods all creation in his lust and relentlessness. Thank God, for the honour of fatherland, Irish Jews are nearly as rare there as red-headed negroes, for when once they adopt the creed they find the Green Isle too hot to hold them—as a rule.

If I must explain why the "credit" was refused, I must tell an unpleasant but undeniable truth—viz. that it resulted from jealousy and unjustness of old chum feeling. The old chum regarded every new comer as an interloper, come to poach upon his especial manor, to pick up profits which he considered a colonial royalty. He hated him in advance for his prospective success, and regarded him with a deadly envy from the marked contrast which he presented between Australian coarseness and British polish, never omitting an opportunity of treating him, when he dare, with rude slight, or doing him, when he could, a covert injury. In 1853, all bank directors in Victoria were old chums; and with this statement I will leave my readers to guess the cause of Mr. T—d—n H—d—s's treatment, reserving to myself, for

another opportunity, some further observation on banks, banking, and bank directors.

The Criterion, in Great Collins-street, flourished contemporaneously with the Union, and was conducted with a degree of enterprise and supervision beyond all praise. If it was a few shades behind the Union in the excellence of its cuisine, it as certainly outstripped it in other respects; and as Mr. M——ss sailed from the United States, it became the great Yankee rendezvous. The principal bar was a positive sight to parties who had never had an opportunity of seeing one in the free and enlightened republic, being strictly modelled on the native principle: the grand mirrors, the imposing decanters, the arrangements of the various manufacturing and potatory implements, the marble counter, the monster claret-cup bowl, and though last, not least, the row of undeniable-looking down Easters, in snow-white shirts and pointed beards, who picked your order from inside your teeth, and had an undeniable "cock-tail" under your nose before your lips had finished its utterance. I saw some choice artists in the Aster and Jenny Houses in New York, and at the Riviere and Trement in Boston; but, to my mind, I never saw anything to compare with the sleight of hand, the gymnastic skill of the group behind the bar at the Criterion, in Melbourne. The rapid way in which they would range a string of tumblers from hand to elbow-bend, filling them all at the same time out of different cocks, and flinging them to different customers, without spilling a drop, was a sight in itself, not to mention the magical manner in which they described arched brandy bows, ceiling high, from tumbler to tumbler, without a spatter, manufacturing multifarious compounds with one hand and counting out change with the other, dashing plain nobblers and whisky drinks, ales and Old Toms about with a reckless indifference, as if glass was cast-iron, and fluids

never lost their centre of gravity. I am told that the late Emperor Nicholas was lost in amazement at witnessing the astonishing manipulation of the children in the cartridge manufactory at Woolwich; but if he had got a peep at the Yankee blades at the Criterion, he never would have found himself again.

Mr. M——es had attached to the hotel a grand, lofty Grecian hall, of noble dimensions, most elegantly fitted up as a billiard saloon, with two of Thurston's first-class tables, and all the modern appliances and appurtenances of the game, presenting a tout-ensemble I never before saw equalled in any billiard-room. Adjoining this there was a hair-cutting saloon, furnished in that style of elaborate comfort and luxury peculiar to those establishments in the United States; and connected with it was the bath house, where hot, cold, vapour, or shower baths could be had at a moment's notice, at a price altogether reasonable, all things considered. There was also a magnificent American bowling saloon, which was for a while very well patronised. But the most remarkable feature of the multiplicious concern was a pretty ornate little vaudeville theatre, capable of containing an audience of five hundred, which was tolerably well supported for a time, and would have been continuously sustained if a suitable company could have been secured; but it soon lapsed into a concert-room, and then became the head-quarters, for a considerable time, of Rainer's celebrated troop of Ethiopian serenaders.

Like the Union, the Criterion was filled in every room and seat at meal times, and British cookery, expelled to make way for the gustatory novelties and sophistries of the Soyer school, was sent to hunt in couples with vulgar half-and-half or whisky-toddy, for at the unique private bar, which, like a casket, was set in a nook of the grand refreshment-room, it would have savoured of desecration to draw any other than a

long cork, and a white-jacketed waiter, I fancy, would have left you long enough waiting for your cutlet à la Maintenon if you sent him on an errand for "spirituous or fermented liquors." To some—indeed to most of habitual company—the bill of fare was a sealed document, as incomprehensible as the prescriptions of Dr. S. S——, which have to come to his own shop for compounding. Many a hundred daily gave their orders by finger indications, and had up dishes which they got through as if they were so many tinctures; while several of those who rehearsed their orders, so far as pronunciation was concerned, made curious mistakes in the meaning. Fast young men, who, previous to their exile, acquired French under the auspices of excursion tickets, swaggered in with an affectation of aplomb, calling aloud, in the language of alternation, "Garçon, give me the carte," which I remember on one occasion provoked a ludicrous commentary from an elevated digger at the next table, who really conceiving, I suppose, that the two-wheeled vehicle was what he asked for, "reminded his —— eyes that he was up-stairs, and if he wanted his cart, to go down and get it himself, and be jolly well —— into the bargain, the ill-mannered cub, who didn't know decency when he met it."

The Criterion was the great gathering-place for cousin Jonathan on the 4th of July. During Mr. M——ss's lesseeship, that memorable day was always ushered in by the thrusting of a jurymast through a skylight in the roof, to sustain the broad American flag, and the projection of horizontal yards from the front windows to display miniature editions of the star-spangled banner. The earliest blink of the sun was sure to discover knots of the calculating citizens waiting for daylight to "realise" the effect of their nocturnal labours; and as they moved off in ecstasies of tobacco-juice to "fix themselves for the day," they were succeeded by groups of their angular brethren, in full evening dress, as

smooth and glossy as if they had just passed through the mangle. By breakfast-time all the local Yankees, including the consul, had paid their devoirs at the bar, swilling "phlegm-cutters" to the glory and greatness of the stars and stripes; and, I will do them the justice to say, prescribing gratuitous drinks to the citizens of all countries who happened to pass within greeting distance.

But the grand feature of the day always is the "celebration dinner," to which the governor, with the leading authorities and the principal inhabitants, are invited, to hear the orator read through his nose a most studiously elaborated exaggeration of the past heroism and the future pre-eminence of the almighty republic; to listen to the poet reciting from bad manuscript a Hiawatha farrago of point-blank verse in celebration of all those political virtues and social magnanimities which they practise in imagination; and, worse than all, to be nauseated with the impertinent trash of three hundred and sixty-four days' preparation and polysyllabic composition, which embryo presidents stuff themselves with, and pull out by the yard as a Chinese juggler would so much dirty ribbon, without seeming to bestow a thought as to how their guests may be entertained or disgusted.

It would appear that the Criterion owed its great run of prosperity to American patronage, for when the Peruvian swindle* took off nearly three-fourths of the Yankee inhabitants, it was a general remark that the hotel was suddenly struck with a blight, which eventuated in the absconding of the proprietor and the entrée of a new lessee.

* The Peruvian swindle was an industriously circulated Yankee report that gold in enormous quantities was discovered at the head waters of the Amazon. The consequence was an immense American exodus there, by which some Yankee shipping speculators reaped prodigious profits,—chartering ships to Callao for guano, and getting full passenger freights for months together.

CHAPTER XX.

Our House and our Neighbours—The Fly Nuisance—Its Disagreeabilities in Private and Public—In City and Diggings—Its Decrease—Politics and the chief Actors—Orange and Green—The Council Chamber—The Squatters and their preposterous Demands—The natural Consequences—The Ministry and the Opposition—A few rough Personal Sketches—The New Constitution—Extraordinary Agitation in the Gold-fields—Contrast in the Towns and Cities—Extreme Regularity of Night Fires—That of Mr. C—ss—'s in Flinder's-lane—Overflowing Attendance—Free Discussions on the Cause—Calculations on the Result—Professor Sands' perspicuous Remark—Turn my Attention to an entirely new Project—Its Nature—Approved by the Chamber of Commerce—How it was treated by the Committee of Adjudication—Their Decision anticipated—The scandalous Conduct explained and accounted for—A fresh Version of the Old Chum Jealousy—A Ship-canal from Melbourne to the Bay still wanting—Would be a most lucrative Project.

Our house on the hill, *per se*, went on admirably all this time. We were as jolly as sand-boys, and had more than our share of colonial enjoyments so far as the household was concerned, but out of doors we were hemmed in by squalor and nuisances. Our now numerous neighbours (the ejected of Canvas Town, which about that time was erased from the map of the world) did not stand punctiliously on nice distinctions. They stretched their clothes-lines across the street, uncaring for the inconvenience in daytime or the danger at night to the passers-by. The front and the back doors were treated with strict impartiality in the ejection of slops and nuisances, which in no wise tended to the tidiness of the streets; added to which, the ordure of a herd of cows, which

came home to be fed and milked, along the narrow footpaths, brought it to as bad a pass as the most stinking and dangerous thoroughfares described by M. Huc in his Tartar pilgrimage.

The fly nuisance in the summer of 1853 was something akin to a plague. They abounded in million myriads everywhere; they almost darkened the air, and were so unbearably saucy and obtrusive that many people armed themselves with what they called horse-tail twigs to thrash them away. But thrash away until your arm ached, and switch thousands upon thousands into pieces, the moment you paused, fresh legions, as if incensed at your brutality, swarmed upon you in buzzing viciousness, straddling over each other's backs in their anxiety to have revenge, the more daring forcing their way up your nostrils and into the corners of your mouth and eyes. All shops seemed alive with them, especially butchers' shops; and when a hanging quarter of beef was disturbed on the hooks to cut out a roasting rib or a sirloin, the insect uproar which ensued was positively startling; the displaced swarm, all the other carcases being preoccupied, following their prey to the block in a stunning hum of determination, and going down in their blind fury almost side by side with the knife in the incision, sometimes seizing on a florid rump-steak, as if they would wrest it off the plate of the customer. Grocers' shops, too, were frightfully infested, for treacle is one of their greatest weaknesses. What gold-dust is to the digger, molasses is to the fly. "Remove the treacle, and the flies will disappear," is an old adage, which wags used ironically to apply to Miss Burdett Coutts when suffering from the persecution of Messrs. Dunn, Brown, and Co.; but as the grocers could not well remove an article in demand, they were obliged to put up with the visitation.

In private houses, even, it was next thing to insufferable.

As the first grey streak of dawn drove the mosquitoes into their retreat, the torpid fly-swarm on the ceiling began to betray symptoms of returning animation, and, ere the lapse of many moments, were in a full burst of activity. Adieu, then, to sleep, from their torturing hum like a wilderness of spinning-wheels, and, wanting mosquito curtains, adieu to all peace and quiet, for hands, or face, or feet put out to cool were instantly invested at all points by those watchful tormentors, who pertinaciously dodged you into the breakfast-parlour, lying in wait for the removal of the covers from the butter-cooler, sugar-basin, or cream-ewer; and if balked in their festal expectations, they immolated themselves by platoons in the hot tea,—I was almost inclined to think, with the barbarous instinct of poisoning the cup in a dying effort of revenge. However, those wholesale hecatombs of self-sacrifices did not appear to have any effect in thinning their ranks, for by dinner-time, like the exhaustless armies of Darius, they were again under arms, watching the retreat of the dish-covers to invade hot meat and steaming soup, and afterwards to poise a lance in pinning your kerchief to your nose if you ventured on an evening siesta.

I wish I had half a farthing for every head of flies that fell in our establishment by violence or poison; but then I must admit that our neighbourhood was a regular nursery for them. I brought home on one occasion a fly poison, which was invented in the hope of coping with the plague, and in very general use in the city and environs. It was a powder which dissolved in water, and, exposed on plates throughout the house, spread about a vapour very fatal to them. They fell by millions of millions everywhere; you crushed them as you walked over the carpet, you squelched them as you sat down on a chair, they dropped paralysed into your wine *inter poculum et labra*, and formed unpleasant re-

presentations of black-currant jam on your bread-and-butter, suggesting practical parodies on Tom Moore's song of "Fly not yet," until, in fact, the cure became worse than the disease.

I know the home reader will at once pronounce my delineation of the fly plague as intensely exaggerated and overcoloured, but I appeal with confidence to the colonist and visitor of the period to bear me out in the picture, and vindicate me from all imputations of incredulity. I declare most solemnly I saw the housemaid, for the tenth time of the day, take the dust-pan and hand-brush, and sweep from the carpet a heap of dead flies that would count by hundreds of thousands.

But, strange, like the diminished intensity of the hot winds, the fly nuisance has since most astonishingly abated, season by season, until the Victorians have as little to complain of in that respect as the home-staying Britisher. In the diggings in 1853 and 1854, the fly nuisance, as I subsequently learned, was equally intolerable. They not only persecuted the men overground by their worrying irritation, but they descended after them in the holes, a larger description, of blue-bottle species, flicking out the candles at least once a minute; and, curious beyond all explanation, this latter tribe increased in numbers as the symptoms of foul air became apparent, seeming to revel in increased mischievousness as the atmosphere became more insufferable, until at last the anomaly came to be regarded as a providential premonition of danger. This I have been assured of by numerous diggers, on whose credibility I have every reason to rely. There were flies also overabounding in number in the diggings which produced a most distressing type of ophthalmia, called "fly blight," most difficult of treatment and most obstinate in its adhesion, often and

often entailing ruin on the poor victims, from their total inability to work. In the digger's tent, the fly had perfect toleration for six days in the week, because they utterly forbade any indulgence in somnolent habits during the working days, but on Saturday evening it was quite a general practice for diggers, before retiring to rest, to set to work at nightfall to expel them, by lighting a lamp outside, and beating the inside of the tent with sheets and towels, in order to enjoy a comfortable snooze on the Sabbath morning. Latterly, however, this necessity is completely obviated by the comparative disappearance of the insect, as I can myself answer for, having lived over a year and a half (during 1854 and 1855) under canvas in Bendigo without ever having experienced the slightest annoyance from them. I am not prepared to offer any sufficient cause, either natural or artificial, for the abatement of this pest. Perhaps, like the visitation of locusts, it may come periodically, but against this presumption I have to adduce the experiences of the older settlers, who say that flies always overabounded until within the last few years, since when their diminution has become a topic of general remark in the more settled districts.

I will now take a step backwards, "from the ridiculous to the sublime," from flies to legislators, and instead of imitating or portraying the hum and buzz of insects, I must endeavour, however humbly, to convey some faint conception of the bearing and the *ore rotundo* enunciation of those heaven-transported statesmen, who were providentially expatriated, not—as cynical anticipators thought I was going to write—for their country's good, but for the exaltation of the country of their adoption. But I beg the reader will not indulge in the expectation that I am going to abandon my free-and-easy mode of communication to embrace the

hard-grained style of political economists, or the metaphysical jargon of constitutional disquisitionists. I touch upon politics against my grain—I would much rather pass them by altogether if I could—but even my rude sketch would be radically wanting, short of a member, if I neglected alluding, however summarily, to parties and politics.

I knew little or nothing of the public men personally; I met few of them in society, and had no occasion for intercourse with them in a public capacity; in fact, many of those who constituted the old Legislative Council were rarely known in their own neighbourhoods. The Government nominees, of course, were men of some mark, including as they did the Executive Council. The prominent men of the Fawkner stamp were also to be found amongst them, but then there were many others who might have been aboriginals, in so far as political fame or scholastic accomplishments were concerned.

I had quite enough of politics in my early days to know that it was far from a paying vocation, and as I visited Victoria rather with a view of bettering my fortunes than for the purpose of climbing the political ladder, I did not court the acquaintance of public characters, or bestow any especial attention on the party questions of the day. But, as I evermore had a penchant for getting into the Speaker's gallery of the House of Commons, listening with enraptured delight to that splendid eloquence which charmed while it instructed the eager listener, I was involuntarily allured at times, in the dearth of other mental attractions, to perch myself in the loft which commanded a view of the Legislative Council-Chamber, which, by the courtesy of the St. Patrick Society, was temporarily located in their great Hall, without any charge for the accommodation. And here let me advert, in terms of commendation, to the general con-

duct of that society, which contrasts most strikingly with that of its rival, the Loyal Orange Institution. Both of them are importations from the old country, representing respectively Ribbonism and Orangeism transplanted to the antipodes with all the original rancour of deadly antagonism, and cherished, as I understand, in the earlier days of the colony, with the same fell spirit that characterised them at home, indulging on their festivals in irritating demonstrations, aggravating processions, and insulting dinners, which very frequently led to fierce and disastrous tumults. But while the disciples of St. Patrick allowed their religious and political zeal to subside into the more genial emotions of good neighbourhood and brotherly love, the protégés of Dutch William "move their wrath to keep it warm," never permitting a festival to pass over without the usual dinner, where the memory of "Our deliverer from brass money and wooden shoes" is drunk in solemn silence, while the toast of "The Pope in the pillory of hell, and the devil pelting priests at him," is drunk with yelling honours, evangelical clergymen joining most boisterously in the demonstration. Another phase of the contrast was furnished by the yielding up of the Hall gratuitously for the common good of the country, and instead of relapsing into an arena for party or religious strife, when the Legislature removed to its national establishment, it has been changed into an open institution, where the votaries of the arts and sciences assemble periodically to cultivate the taste and promote the refined progress of the colony, while the Protestant Hall remains the foul den of a factious party, marked by the spiteful spleen which attends impotence, hissing hatefully but harmlessly, like the serpent when deprived of its sting.

The temporary Council-Chamber was a plain apartment, and, though limited in space, was amply sufficient for the

accommodation of the members, who rarely mustered in full strength, as some of the electoral districts were remote and inaccessible, and voters were so scarce and indifferent there was no voice to proclaim the call of duty. When Mr. Fellows, the late Solicitor-General, was selected by the squatters as their legal advocate in the Legislature, and assigned the Lodden district to sit for in 1854, the first attempt at election fell through from the want of a brace of electors to observe the form of proposing and seconding him in his absence; and on the next occasion—as the story goes—the honourable and learned gentleman, who started from Melbourne with his proposer and seconder chained and hooded, got bushed in searching for the hustings, and was driven to get a shepherd, whom he met by accident, to perform the functions of returning officer; his flock, by a mere legal fiction, representing the electors, congregated by proclamation to attend the poll.

The topics of political agitation during the session of 1853 were, in the diggings, "the abolition of the license-tax;" in the towns and agricultural districts, "the unlocking of the lands;" but on the floor of the House, "the new constitution." The press took turns at all three, but dwelt principally on the second; the *Argus* especially demanding a full and immediate settlement of that most intricate and absorbing question in anticipation of the great colonial charter, under which alone all sane and provident citizens felt it absolutely futile to deal with it. The ultra-radical tone adopted by the press on the land question aroused the squatters to action in and out of doors. They had their clique in the House, and their league at the Port Phillip Club Hotel; they pretended to despise the fourth estate, to contemn the Legislature, and only to recognise the interference of the Imperial or Privy Council in so far as it

tallied with their precious notions of equity; they raved and they ranted in the most incoherent and unmeaning manner, at one and the same time wailing almost in tearful tones the lamentable pitch of poverty and destitution to which they were reduced by the encroachments of the diabolical digger, and boasting in tones of triumph of the incalculable sum they had subscribed to carry their claims to a successful issue. These claims, by some inscrutable computative process, they mounted up to millions, by extracting, as it would appear to the vulgar eye, debits of a most destructive character where credits seemed to swell in overabounding affluence, like the ingenious logic of the Mudfog Association, which could be made to prove "that this is the other end of the table." By a skilful disposition of figures they showed an enormous balance of loss, resulting from the advance of mutton and beef from one penny to sevenpence per pound, which they most perversely persisted in increasing, by importing countless herds and flocks from the neighbouring colonies, instead of remaining passively quiescent under their local misfortunes. The advance of horses, too, from a nominal value of five or ten pounds to a three-figure price, by a parity of calculation was equally ruinous; and with a corresponding perversity of practice they refined upon their own destruction by driving large mobs of them overland from Sydney and South Australia. Even hides, horns, and sheepskins, which in 1852 might not only have been taken away without leave, but with a voluntary acknowledgment of compliment from the embarrassed owners, operated—the squatters could demonstrate—with a degree of incalculable prejudice, by having risen respectively to the intrinsic worth of 30s. per hide, 10s. per cwt., and 6s. per skin. They could make it clearly apparent to the dullest comprehension how fearfully they were damnified by the deprivation of territory

which they never occupied, by its coming into the possession of diggers, who thereby created a carcase market at their boundaries; the same possession being employed to testify to the annihilation of wool-growing, while purblind people, relying on export statistics, would be led to imagine that the wool crop of Victoria flourished side by side with the golden harvest. However, not to weary the reader with my ironical reasoning, I will conclude this paragraph by saying that the squatter was silly enough to indulge in the hope of deluding the Legislature by a parade of false pretences, and to excite the everlasting enmity of the predominant class in the colony by an incessant outpouring of undeserved obloquy and maledictions on their heads, which have been treasured up in remembrance, and, I fear, will be visited with a degree of vengeance in the final settlement of the land question.

The press and the radical agitators saw the silly weakness of the squatters in pressing unsustainable demands, and gratuitously insulting that section of the public who would be most potential in annulling them, and they laboured most assiduously in fomenting the quarrel, until squatters and diggers glared at each other when they met, feeling as if they were created for mutual hate and destruction. We shall see how this feeling operated in the end; and, without any pretensions to prescience, I could predicate it, as I gathered and collated expressions of public sentiment, and listened to the upstart insolence of their self-constituted leader in the Council, a spirit dealer called Goodman, who, by some trick of trade, wormed himself into the possession of a run in the Murray district.

I always endeavoured, in my visits to the Legislative Council, to hit upon the debates on the Constitution, and although I cannot in candour say that I was impressed, on the whole, with any very elevated notion of the rhetorical

powers of the Victorian Senate, I must avow that the speeches, generally, evinced an amount of careful study, and a thorough plain common-sense understanding of the broad and difficult subject, for which I was wholly unprepared, while, in some individual instances, there was a display of constitutional lore, an evidence of oratorical attributes, that would have taken respectable rank in the British House of Commons. The personal presence of William Foster Stairell prepossessed me in his favour as I last saw him rise. The natural graces of his unstudied elocution, the purity of his classical diction, the lucid arrangement of his perspicuous arguments, and his readiness in reply or in combating interruption, satisfied me at an early date of his surpassing aptitude for his position as Attorney-General. John Leslie Foster, the Colonial Secretary, though wanting in the exterior attractions of physical beauty or symmetry, convinced me, on the first night of my attendance, that he had a strong natural mind, well stored and disciplined, and a brain abounding in tact, as well as a tongue excelling in readiness, which constituted him in my mind, and in the estimation of the House, an admirable debater. The Government also possessed another man, able in speech and ratiocination, and a sort of living lexicon in respect of reference, Hugh C. E. Childers, who at once took a commanding position in public affairs on his advancement to the Commissionership of Customs at the decease of Mr. Cassells; and Mr. Murphy, then the President of the Central Road Board, and now the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution, I remember delivered a speech on the Constitution measure which impressed me very favourably as to the scope of his general abilities.

The Opposition, if it can be properly so denominated, was not at that time able to cope with the Government in respect

of trained talent or ability, but still there were some clever men on the left hand of the then Speaker, who is at present the President of the Legislative Council, with the honour of knighthood. Mr. Fawkner, who from his position with regard to the colony I must class as the Premier on that side, certainly took the lead, so far as zeal and patriotic anxiety for the future were concerned; but I could have wished that his conduct had been less leavened with petulance, and more liberally imbued with consideration. No one could possibly harbour a doubt as to his thorough honesty or the sincerity of his earnestness, but many of his best friends and most ardent admirers deplored that he did not endeavour to place some restraint over his natural temperament, which, though evidently strained to excess—in a burning desire of serving the country not only of his adoption, but, I may say, of his making—tended to distract and retard the satisfactory settlement of the momentous question on which the good destinies of the colony so materially depended.

Mr. O'Shaunassy, who had earned considerable reputation in the former sessions from his thorough acquaintance with all subjects interwoven with colonial progress and development, took some strides in advance in that of 1853. He is a self-educated Irishman, who, while working his way to independence in fortune, made colonial politics his study, his great natural abilities, combined with intense application, enabling him to arrive at a thorough understanding of the grievances and requirements of the land of his adoption. Considering his antecedents, his pronunciation and the grammatical correctness and appositeness of his diction are really surprising, more especially so when taken in connexion with his rapid utterance, which flows in a continuous stream like a mill-race, unbroken by pause, emphasis, or modulation. If Mr. O'Shaunassy had had the benefits of collegiate training in

early life, and had been familiarised with the graces and effects of elocution, he might readily have been moulded into a positive orator; but all inartificial and ungainly as is his delivery, his speeches never fail of producing a becoming effect, whether in introducing a motion or winding up a debate; while the readiness of his replies, and the quickness of his retort, are of an order to command admiration, save when they are stained and disfigured by the ebullitions of an uncontrollable Celtic temperament, which I regret to remark are by far too easily provoked. Nevertheless, with all his faults and imperfections, John O'Shaunassy, if he lives to an average age, is certain to take high, if not the highest, rank amongst Victorian statesmen; and I sincerely trust that the self-discipline which he proved himself so capable of imposing on himself in his career of acquirement may even at a later day be applied with a like efficacy in opposing restraints to the impulses of his fervid temper. Mr. O'Shaunassy did good service in the Constitution debate, and both within the walls of the House and in the estimation of the country awakened admiration and promise.

Dr. Greeves, by turning everything, and nothing long, somehow or other acquired an oratorical reputation that excited my curiosity, but, I am bound to say, quite disappointed my expectations. He is, in no sense of the term, entitled to such a character in my humble opinion, and certainly must have acquired it when rhetoric was very imperfectly comprehended in the colony; at best, he is only gifted with a certain degree of pedantic fluency, which, by enabling him to spout at times for twenty minutes or three-quarters of an hour, entitles him to be called a speaker, but orator he cannot be properly called without an entire perversion of sense and meaning. He is, however, a painstaking man, who, with the education necessary for professional pursuits, a fair share of small

ability, and a great ambition for public fame or notoriety, has given all his time of later years to the study of public questions, beginning with those of a corporate calibre, and mounting upwards in the scale to those involving constitutional doctrines. He, too, made a decent speech on the subject in question; but although by an unforeseen revolution of the political wheel he was lately pitched into the position of a Cabinet Minister, and ejected again before his seat was well warmed, I shall be much disappointed if the doctor ever again emerges from the mediocre class to which he undoubtedly belongs.

I have neither space nor inclination to specify the other notabilities of the Opposition, but there was still another class in the House, containing men of colonial note and marked ability—men, too, deserving of all honour for the unselfishness and moderation of their views and the honesty and candour of their conduct—for, squatters though they were and are, they did not refuse to acknowledge the prodigious benefits the discovery of gold accumulated on the colony, nor did they seek to array themselves in hostile opposition to the developing progress of the digger in the rational settlement of the country. Amongst these men I will content myself with enumerating Mr. Colin Campbell, Mr. Griffiths, and Mr. Snodgrass, who, with as much at stake as the growlers of the Goodman school, evinced their disposition to bow to the new order of events, and trim the state barque for the gales and currents which had so unexpectedly arisen. Mr. Campbell is a man of a very high order of attainments, and with powers of speech which rank him amongst the best debaters in the Colonial Parliament. Mr. Griffiths, too, is a gentleman of considerable ability, equally respected in public and private life, a man of matured views, whose opinions, delivered with unstudied elegance

and ease, invariably command respect and attention. Mr. Snodgrass is more of a practical man than polished politician, who, possessing as much experienced knowledge as any of his class, assuredly on the score of disinterestedness earned higher claims to national respect than most of them, not being in possession of that overabounding wealth which would enable him to practise magnanimity with absolute impunity.

And now let me finish for the present any further reference to Parliament, politics, or public men. The session of 1853 eventuated in the framing of a constitution the most liberal that had yet been sought for by, or awarded to, a British colony. In a future chapter I will notice the manner in which it was found to work when returned with the ratification of our gracious Sovereign as the "Magna Charta" of that distant gem of her crown which bears and rejoices in her own royal name. The diggers being without representatives—at least, direct or recognised representatives—in the Parliament, were naturally anxious and jealous about their future rights and privileges, and as they attributed all their grievances to the despotic administration of the existing laws, they, by means of "the pressure from without," sought to impress the Legislature with the justice and the exigency of their demands, which, through their agitations, were specified under the heads of "universal suffrage," "representation solely based on population," and "annual parliaments." These clamorous demagogues, who managed to extract a golden harvest from the agitation, persuaded the diggers that the license-tax would be perpetual, that encroachments on private property would be utterly prohibited for ever and a day, and that the lands would be continued under lock and key, and only doled out to the pet and privileged classes. The temporary consequence of this creed

was like the bursting of flame from rotten sticks. The whole digging population were wound up into a frenzy, and any one reading the reports of the gold-fields excitement would have imagined that gold-seeking, like other plethoras, had begun to pall upon the appetite of acquisitiveness, and that a new revelrous pleasure had been discovered in political agitation.

The eternal requisitions for public meetings were one and all couched in language which would seem to emanate from people suffering in the most frightful agonies of political destitution. Their resolutions conveyed the idea of a people writhing in despotic tortures, and their frenzied speeches read like so many leave-takings of their senses. "Give us universal suffrage, and take our gold-dust; grant us a full measure of representation, and we will resign our leads and gutters; and only throw in annual parliaments, and we will become 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.'" And this apparently all-pervading political sentiment amongst the diggers was the more remarkable from the direct contrast which it presented to the lethargic indifference of the mercantile, professional, and mechanical classes, who, at the same era, could not be got together on any public occasion, being, to all appearances, wholly indifferent about their lives and liberties.

Often, I might almost say regularly, on returning home from the debates in the Legislative Council, I had opportunities of winding-up my evenings with exciting afterpieces, for I may say, in sober sadness, that so regular, so habitual had the recurrence of nightly fires become, that the first inquiry of a heavy sleeper of a morning was, "Where was the fire last night?" so that conflagrations became as regular in a way as tides, differing, though, in these respects, that they only occurred once in the twenty-four hours, and

that the full moon exercised an opposing influence. The effect was demoralising to the last degree, for when humble men were led to believe that their superiors resorted to felonious crime in order to retrieve their financial difficulties, it was not to be wondered at that they inductively acquitted themselves of any impropriety from improving their circumstances by the commission of burglary or highway robbery.

The roaring fire at Messrs. C—f—s and Co.'s, of Flinder's-lane, was excellently well attended. The evening was fine and calm, and as the flames ascended perpendicularly, they were seen afar off, so that the assemblage was momentarily augmented by arrivals from the country—St. Kilda, Sandridge, South Yarra, Richmond, Prahran, Hawthorne, Northcote, Flemington, and Footscray—to look on the glowing exhibition; the suburban visitors all sitting in their vehicles, indulging in eager inquiries, and unsparing insinuations as to the origin of the calamity, while probably Mr. C—f—s was sipping a tumbler of punch close by, complaining, like Sheridan at the Drury Lane blaze, "that he could not be allowed to enjoy a glass in comfort at his own fireside." This, at the time, was considered, as the phrase went, "one of the most flagrant fires of the year." All the preliminary arrangements would appear to have transpired while it was in progress, for one group would tell another how a carboy of turpentine and a cask of pitch were removed to a convenient place at a late hour of the evening, and a case of matches brought into connexion with them; while others would tell you circumstantially of certain heavy engagements which could not be otherwise met, in consequence of certain heavy losses in the particular transactions; and any one, or every one in the crowd, could tell you the exact amount of the policies in the Victoria, the Tasmanian, or the Liverpool and London Assurance Companies, and, in the

same breath, go within a fraction of the value of all the spurious bales and doctored boxes that were flaring up ever and anon with dazzling brilliancy. I recollect that the night but one after C—f—s's fire I came across from the hill to see another blaze close by the former scene, on the opposite side of the way. It was a well-insured public-house in declining business. I met my friend Professor Sands amongst the spectators, who remarked: "It was the uld disease a-breaking out in fresh places; an' no reason for tears of compassion neither, for half the water he made his customers pay seven-an-six a pint for would put out the hull fire; besides, in most cases, a public in ashes is worth ten thousand pounds."

Having a little spare time on hand, I now took a turn at an entirely new style of business, for which I dare say my presumption and impertinence was pretty frequently apostrophised. The mercantile classes, suffering to a frightful degree from the delays, the extortions, and the transit robberies of the lightery system, commenced an agitation for the bringing up of ships to the city, and the formation of docks for their accommodation. Amongst other moves in that direction, they caused premiums to be advertised of 500*l.*, 300*l.*, and 100*l.* respectively, for the best places, designs, and estimates for accomplishing the design in the best, quickest, and most economical manner, fixing a time and place for the delivery of the papers to an authorised secretary, and unfortunately nominating a committee of selection from amongst a certain section not overburdened with business or scrupulosity.

There were no restrictions as to the competitors; the field was open to all. Still the general impression was that it would be confined to engineers, as the project necessarily included both draughting and surveying. However, without ever

once dreaming of either meriting or claiming any of the premiums, I resolved on giving my views and calculations. I went to work, in the first instance, in making a plain but neat and correct map of the south-west end of the city, including all the suburb intervening betwixt it and the bay, marking the course of the Yarra on it. Taking Batman's Hill, at the end of Collins-street, as my starting-point, I measured the river from the base of the hill to its disemboguement, and found it to be eight miles, whereas, in a direct line, it was only one mile three furlongs, over ground as level as the sea. Having ascertained this wide difference, I made borings in a straight line to depths necessary for the excavation of a ship-canal, and found it could be cut as easily as a turf bank or a Cheshire cheese. I then bethought me that instead of a distinct canal it would be much the better plan to divert the entire river into a new channel.

I came to this conclusion for the following reasons: Because a distinct canal would require nearly all the water of the river, as the Yarra would be the only feeder, so that the old channel would thus be valueless. I entered into calculations which proved to me that a new cut for the Yarra, one mile three furlongs in length and so much as thirty feet deep, could be made for less money than excavating eight miles of the river-bed to the same depth. I listened to tales of the disastrous consequences of winter floods in times past; I saw in the last season the immense breadth of splendid alluvial land which was covered by the flood-waters that were backed up by tortuous windings of the river; and I heard medical men expatiate on the miasmatic influences of the marshy stagnations caused by the sluggish course of the Yarra, all of which evils I saw at a glance would be removed, and thousands upon thousands of acres of the lowest land thoroughly

reclaimed for park, or garden, or any other purposes, by carrying the Yarra in a direct line to Hobson's Bay, for the incline that would not admit of the semblance of a current in a course of eight miles would increase it to comparative impetuosity in the shorter distance, carrying flood-waters readily away, and draining all the swamp land about Sandridge, Emerald Hill, and St. Kilda on the one side, and those in the neighbourhood of Saltwater River on the other. And, over and above these considerations, it appeared to me that the river in its straight and rapid course would always keep its channel and entrance clear, and offer no obstructions to navigation; whereas the Yarra, in its old course, would require perpetual dredging, and present serious dangers and difficulties in its innumerable bends and angles to the passage of large ships. I next proceeded to show that my plan would be immediately reproductive or self-defraying; that the stuff thrown out of an excavation one hundred and fifty feet by thirty, equally divided and levelled, would give an area of three hundred feet wide on either side, which would present the noblest site for stores and warehouses; and, calculating the price of frontages fifty per cent. below the current rates property was then fetching fronting the wharfs, I proved they would realise a sum more than sufficient to cover the entire outlay, including the formation of small indented docks along the margin of the new cut for the accommodation of the local trade. The great city dock, for which there is the grandest possible natural site in the crescent-shape space between Batman's and the Barrack Hills, abutting upon Great Collins, Bourke, and Lonsdale streets, I showed could be constructed in a like facile and self-defraying manner.

I will abstain from going into details or calculations, as they would not interest the general reader. I also kept them secret at the time, because I found that all the other avowed

competitors confined themselves exclusively to dealing with the old river in various ways, many in their confident vanity exhibiting monster unfolding maps, large enough for panoramas at the Egyptian Hall, whereon was portrayed the turbid, tortuous Yarra, and its low banks fringed with tea-tree scrub, as a lively pellucid stream winding gracefully beneath majestic groves of gum and stringy bark, through which high-pressure steam-boats and great clipper ships, with sky-sails and studding-sails alow and aloft, were scudding past each other with as little inconvenience as so many wood-pigeons, painted most gorgeously in variegated rainbow hues, and crowded with eager passengers, who all appeared to be singing "Cheer, boys, cheer, for the new and happy land," and the very next thing to leaping ashore in their overabounding joy.

I could not help feeling that my meagre pen-and-ink sketch would look small and shabby beside those glorious Claude Lorrain pictures, so I kept it back to the last moment required by the advertisement, which, as the day approached, was republished, stating in equally positive terms that all the plans should be punctually delivered, and that on the following day the committee of selection would proceed to their adjudication. I went to deliver mine at noon, in person, on the last day, and I thought the secretary would burst his boot-lacings in endeavouring to suppress his laughter while hanging up my miserable scrawl in such gallant company; for, to the ordinary eye, it no doubt looked as a village sign-board would in the National Gallery. On the afternoon of the same day I sent a duplicate of my map, and a copy (I got them lithographed) of my plan and calculations in detail, with reasons and explanations, to the Chamber of Commerce, to which all the élite of the mercantile community belonged. It so happened they held a monthly meeting on that day;

nevertheless, it appeared they investigated my design and calculations at once, for in the course of next day I received a note from the secretary of the Chamber, couched in most flattering terms, stating that the assembled members had most carefully examined my plan and calculations, and were unanimous in their approval of both, and that he was desired to convey to me the warmest thanks and congratulations of the body, as well as their desire that my project should be adopted.

I had not well digested this very agreeable compliment, when I was handed another official communication from the secretary of the committee of adjudication, stating "that from unforeseen circumstances they would not proceed with their deliberations for another month." I saw the dodge the moment I read the note, and I offered to wager several of my acquaintances, who had inspected the various plans in the public room, that during the delay new plans would be admitted, and the old ones be permitted to be altered and amended. I was a new chum and a non-professional man, and it would never do that my competitors, who were all old chums, and engineers—save the mark!—at least those who got the premiums—should be put hors de combat by such a person. I was well aware of the mean, pettifogging spirit of jealousy which existed in all phases of competition between the lime-juicer and the old colonist, and my predications were fully verified. The old river plans were nearly altogether abandoned, and although most of the original pictures remained staring the public in the face, the first premium was awarded to a person who gave in an amended project almost *totidem verbis* with mine, and while even those who did not get premiums (being old chums) received most complimentary acknowledgments of their abilities, poor pilgarlic got never a line. It was about as barefaced a pro-

ceeding as could have been well perpetrated, but so far from being disappointed at the result, I plumed myself excessively in anticipating it, as a full confirmation of the opinions I had formed of our colonial forefathers. Let me not be misunderstood: I mean those classes of them who degenerated into jobbers and adventurers, and, like vultures, were always engaged in sweeping the horizon in search of prey or offal. They got it in the above instance, and I hope the meal agreed with them, as some wag said in an anticipative sense to the Bishop of New Zealand when about to embark on his mission, alluding to the probability of his being devoured by cannibals. I am happy, however, to add, that the liberal infusion of new blood during the last few years has tabooed this disgraceful propensity, and equalised the chances of emulative competition between the natives and the immigrants. The necessity for this undertaking is still urgent, and offers a most safe and tempting investment for associated capitalists, who, there is every reason to suppose, would meet every possible encouragement from Government. As a public work it cannot be attempted for years, until after the completion of the great railway scheme, involving an outlay of eight millions, but what from the revenue and the value of property from the reclaimed lands which would be granted by Parliament for the project, it offers a more promising field for expenditure than any presented either in America or the European kingdom.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Trial—Hard Swearing—Great Sweating—Preponderance of Irish Barristers—My Drive to Kilmore—Endurance of Colonial Horses as compared with Home ones—Suggestions on the Subject—Recognised by an ould Acquaintance—Number of Irish in the Neighbourhood—How accounted for—Extract from the Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners—Magnificent Testimony to noble Attributes of the Celtic Character—The Remittance System growing up rapidly in Australia—Distinctive Instincts of the English, Scotch, and Irish—Carty's Account of the improved Style of Irish Cultivation about Kilmore—He disproves the olden Allegation of Irish Indolence and Vice—Cause of the early Progress of the Kilmore District—A Programme for the Guidance of new Settlers in the Country Districts—A Register showing the proper Seasons for sowing and planting the different Descriptions of Farm and Garden Produce—Remarks on the Farm-yard and Dairy—Interesting Extract from *Facts and Figures*—Remarks about the past and present Prices of Land—A Paragraph on the present and future Prospects of Agricultural Operations.

THE long-deferred trial about the waterproof clothing came off at last in the county court. The swearing of the opposing parties was as solemn and as opposite as could well be imagined. Every allegation of the plaintiff—so help him the God of the Old Testament—was directly contravened and contradicted by the witnesses for the defence with due Christian earnestness, and no doubt the worthy judge would, in the absence of predilection, have been constrained to resort to the doctrine of chances, "and sky a copper" to arrive at a decision, only that Mr. S——bs, the auctioneer, who was cognisant of the bargain in all its details, came in

at the last moment, and gave impartial testimony in my brother's favour, which carried the verdict.

The court on that day differed in no respect from the Black Hole of Calcutta, save in its lightsomeness. It was a hot wind outside, and when it commingled with the confined animal vapour inside, it produced an atmosphere beyond the powers of imagination to conjure up a semblance of. The judge's wig dripped, and the barristers' wigs dripped, and the witnesses, like wet umbrellas in a corner, soon stood in a pool of their own perspiration. The reporters were obliged to give over, for their scrapes and scratches ran into one another in discoloured blots; attorneys who wore spectacles were continually wiping away the condensed steam from the glasses; and the packed spectators outside the bar looked as if the cataracts of porous exudation would obliterate their features.

I observed a vast number of new faces under horse-hair, and the predominant tone of the new comers smacked strongly of the Liffey. Even at that period the supreme courts had a sinecure, Nisi Prius was in its infancy, and Equity was Greek to the multitude. Consequently, M—h—e and I—l—d might be seen in this vapour-bath all day long, receiving tribute and reciprocating astonishment at the audacity of each other's clients' presumption in bringing such paltry cases into court. I am not now going to dwell on the subject of litigation, but I must say, en passant, that the constant exhibitions of opposite swearing which at every trial might be heard in that court, must have had the effect of subtracting from the moral or religious obligation of oaths in general, and was quite sufficient to beget a distaste for that meed of law reform which enables plaintiffs and defendants to give evidence in their own civil suits.

Now that the trial was over, the docks plan disposed of, and nothing very tempting in the auction line, I turned my attention to the interior; and as I heard great things of a new township called Heathcote, which was being laid out at the M'Ivor Diggings (one of the later gold-fields), I made up my accounts to go there "in search of the pecuniesque," having arranged to stay with a friend at Kilmore, and have a look at the agricultural progress of the neighbourhood. The town of Kilmore is about thirty-eight miles from Melbourne, on the direct Ovens and Sydney road, and the intervening country is, in places, as rich and fertile as it is possible for land to be; the good largely predominating over the inferior quality. Near Melbourne, a very nice and populous village called Brunswick was springing up, and between it and Pentridge* appeared to be a favourite district for pretty villas and country residences, as many in a finished state, and a still greater number in progress, seemed to mark out the line of the future permanent road. I saw some fine farms on a large scale, evidently a good while in cultivation, and several of small dimensions of modern birth, all bearing teeming testimony to the quality of the soil in the abundant promise of the crops. At some points there were magnificent prospects, both of fine open country and closely-wooded districts; and the Plenty ranges, clothed with timber all over, almost at times presented the appearance of high-rolling prairie land, as they showed no gap in the dense foliage to enable the strange spectator to distinguish between the sloping tree-tops and the surface of rising land.

* Pentridge is the seat of the principal penal stockade in the colony, where the convicts are imprisoned. I feel relieved from the necessity of describing it, as a full-length portrait, and an admirably correct one, has already appeared in *Household Words*.

I travelled with my friend in his tax-cart, with an outrigger; and although we never went a rapid rate, we reached our destination early in the day. We only waited to bait our horses once on the journey, which to the home wayfarer would, no doubt, appear cruel; but the general usage in that respect all over the Australian colonies, differs very widely from British practice. Squatters, or farmers, think nothing of riding or driving fifty miles without a halt, nor do the animals seem to require it, even though the roads are so much more difficult, and the horse condition all got up on green food. Forty miles in of a morning, and out of an afternoon, or seventy miles in to-day, and out to-morrow, is a most ordinary occurrence; and, amongst other feats of the kind, of which I was personally cognisant, was that of a party of three driving a pair of horses from St. Kilda to Kyneton, and returning the same night, a distance of one hundred and ten miles. When in California, I remarked that the horses were capable of performing what I thought to be extraordinary feats, and putting both experiences together, I begin inclining to the opinion that the British horse is rendered incapable of such performances by too much petting and pampering. A man who would attempt driving his horse from London to Birmingham, over one of the finest roads in the world, would be put in the newspaper pillory as the most inhuman of brutes, and prosecuted most likely by the Anti-Cruelty Society as a monster. Yet in Australia, animals of the same blood, taken from a grass paddock overnight, can perform the same distance over a rough bush road without betraying a symptom of distress. Does anybody "know the reason why?" If it is not to be accounted for according to my theory, in support of which I will adduce the human analogies, to prove that men at home, who never wielded anything more distressing than a

goosequill or a magnum-bonum, came by practice to shoulder a heavy log with equal facility. Go to the Inns of Court, and pick out a party of the sturdiest Templars to sink an Artesian well in Lincoln's Inn-fields; when would it be finished, think you? Never, did you say? Ay, never, I repeat; simply because these midnight-oil-consuming-gentlemen, being brought up like so many "delicacies of the season," could not do such work to save their lives. It would be absolute cruelty to compel them to make the attempt—madness to think of accomplishing an impossibility. Yet I have seen men of that class—weakly to look at too—who sank and slabbed, and pumped and drove some of the most trying holes at Ballarat, improving so in health and physical development on the hard work and simple diet, that I have my doubts if their anxious mothers would recognise them without their glasses. Then I say, if men are capable of performing greater bodily achievements by a change of habits, why not the horse by having recourse to an altered system of training?

I was much astonished at the appearance of Kilmore in more than one respect, for it appeared to me like a place at least half a century old. And, again, it gave the idea that Tubbercurry, or Ballerodare, was rafted over holus-bolus from the Emerald Isle, so completely and intensely Irish was the entire population in appearance, in accent, and in the peculiarly Milesian style of huckstering arrangement in which the shops were set out; and, lest I might have had my lingering misgivings on the subject, additional proof was afforded me by a man whom I observed dodging me in all my movements during my first stroll through the little town, and who at last, on hearing my voice, exclaimed, as he confronted me with a beaming countenance, "Arrah, by J——! sure you're Master William!" "That's my name, cer-

tainly," I replied; "have we ever met before?" "Ah, thin, blud-an-ouns, how's every inch of you? Meet afore is it?—at Bomore, in ould Sligo, where you carried the day on Irishman." "So, you recollect me, I see," said I, "though that race came off some years ago." "Remimber you, indeed; why thin I'd be far gone wid sore eyes if I wouldn't know your skin on a bush. But there's no use in talkin'," he continued, "come down wid me, sir, an' see the place an' family."

I went with him accordingly, and, in explanation, was enabled to bring to mind some home reminiscences of his family and neighbourhood, which delighted him beyond measure. His name was Carty; he lived in the town, but had a fine block of land of sixty acres in the suburbs, all under crop, and every inch his own. At home, a few years before, he was one of that poor spalpeen class who rented an acre of land and a mud cabin, and went over to reap the harvest in England in order to make up the rent; but on the occasion of our meeting he owned a plot in the town, and built the house he inhabited by means of his earnings from the farm, which he purchased at the upset price of 1*l.* per acre before the diggings commenced—rather a radical change in his condition in a very brief period. He explained to me the reason of the aggregation of Irish in the neighbourhood in a very simple and natural way—one that will be very easily understood by any person familiar with the invariable habits of the Irish emigrants on the American continent, where the first use an exile of Erin makes of his savings is to remit every penny beyond that required for his own immediate and pressing wants to his friends at home, to enable them to join him in the land of promise. It is a matter of public record the enormous sums sent by the Irish in America to rescue their relatives from destitution; and the

same feeling which actuates the Irish peasant in alleviating the misery of his friends incites him to desire their presence to participate in his good fortune. It is the inherent prevalence of this noble sentiment which has studded the United States so thickly with the Celtic race, and which hastened and swelled the memorable exodus in 1847, without which all the splendid aid of the Government, all the munificent contributions of English charity, would have been of little avail.

In connexion with these remarks, I will introduce a few short extracts from the "Fifteenth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners:"—"We find that the amounts remitted through the bankers and merchants, who are good enough to supply us with information on the subject, were, in 1854, larger than in any previous year. We reproduce the returns since we first obtained them, as a testimony of generosity and self-denial probably unparalleled in the world. The amounts were, in

		£
1848	upwards of	460,000
1849	"	540,000
1850	"	957,000
1851	"	990,000
1852	"	1,404,000
1853	"	1,439,000
1854	"	1,780,000

"With regard to these remittances sent home by emigrants to North America, there is one feature connected with them to which we wish to call attention. When money was first sent home in 1847 or 1848, it was, we believe, almost exclusively intended to enable those who were left behind in the mother country to join their more fortunate relatives who had preceded them. But the remittances of the last two years have far exceeded the amounts necessary

for that purpose. It would seem to follow that, in both those years, considerable portions of the very large sums (in 1854 considerably more than a million) have been received from the United States for purposes wholly unconnected with emigration; and thus it follows that the labour of the Irish peasant, though employed in a foreign country many thousand miles off, still continues a source of direct advantage to his native place, and of comfort and well-being to those whom he has left behind."

It is not easy to conceive, and would be still more difficult to write, a more splendid tribute of praise and appreciation of the inherent nobleness and magnanimity of the Irish Celtic character than is conveyed by the naked figures—an unvarnished commentary on them—quoted above. In glorious truth they constitute "a testimony of generosity and self-denial probably (nay, positively) unparalleled in the world." The poor reviled and maligned Irish peasant—"the alien in blood, in language, and religion" of Lord Lyndhurst; "the savage, the brute, the beast" of the historian Macaulay; "the bloody assassin" of the *Times;* "the midnight murderer" of the *Quarterly;* "the difficulty" of all Governments; "the bugaboo" of the Legislature; and "the debased idolater" of Exeter Hall—is found and proved to eclipse all other races, be "their blood, their language, and their religion" what they may, in that fundamental principle of all mundane religion and morality so comprehensively enjoined in the fifth commandment, and so literally interpreted by this calumniated people, who not only "honour," but love, cherish, and maintain father and mother, brother and sister, and even, as regards fatherland, "drag at each remove a lengthening chain." During a tolerably long experience I have evermore found the good son and kind brother an excellent and upright man in all relations of life, and *vice versâ*,

nor do I believe that anything short of the most "base, bloody, and brutal" treatment, both from former Governments and bygone landlords, could have driven the Irish peasantry to excesses which, in my mind, never transcended the provocation. But, thank God, those dark days have passed away: may the remembrance of the mutual miseries they witnessed sink likewise into the depths of oblivion!

The report is in error in asserting that the remittance system commenced in 1847 and 1848; to my own personal knowledge it existed long anterior to those dates, and from what I was in the habit of hearing, even in my childhood, I am satisfied it is coeval with the first origination of Irish emigration. As to the supposition regarding the allocation of the enormous surplus of late years beyond the requirements of American emigration, I believe it is equally a misconception, as I have reason to know it was used by the recipients in emigrating to Australia since the discovery of gold in that country; and if the numbers who emigrated thither would not at the first blush account for the magnitude of the amount, the great difference in the cost must, in the first place, be taken into consideration, and next, the necessity of having a certain sum in hand on landing in an expensive country, where there were no friends to receive them. The report, further on, also says: "There are signs of a commencement of the same system of remittances from Australia as has prevailed for years in America, and these remittances will introduce a different class into the emigration. The facility with which money is acquired in Australia makes it probable that the amount sent home will be quite as large in proportion to the number of persons by whom it is sent." Bravo! I say; hurrah for the aliens! Who deserve to find gold so well as those who make such noble use of it?

The English emigrant, when he acquires money, increases his personal and domestic comforts. In his improved condition he abandons pedestrian exercise, and takes his recreations on horseback, or in a gig, alternating them with his dog and his gun. The Scotchman, equally canny in affluence or indigence, is only slightly affected by improved circumstances in prosperity; he may resort to diet less cutaneous in its tendencies, but he seldom goes beyond plain fare; and instead of squandering his savings in fleeting amusements, he erects them into a balance at his banker's, the contemplation of which never fails to suffuse him with rapturous delight. But the Irish emigrant almost regards himself as the trustee of his family and connexions; born poor and inured to hardship, he deems it sacrilege to use his superabundant earnings in selfish enjoyment while those he loves and respects may be steeped in poverty and distress, and confined in his knowledge of banking to the name of that which "he once ran upon," he initiates his thrift by making his lodgment in the heel of his stocking; and when that begins to "make a decent appearance," he casts about for a respectable countryman through whose agency he can at once relieve himself of a burden of uneasiness, and contribute to that of his far-distant friends.

In the early, or pastoral days of the colony, Scotchmen vastly predominated over all others in the aggregate, while the Irish counted a miserable minority; but now the tables are turned, and Irish, as far as numbers go, are in the ascendant beyond any other distinct race, notwithstanding their original poverty and the expense of the voyage, and without seeking an explanation in any excess of partiality in the selections of free emigration. In fact and truth it was and is altogether owing to the national characteristic alluded to above; and in the instance of Kilmore, Carty in-

formed me such was the case, in confirmation of which he ran over a list of late remittances within his own knowledge, the magnitude of which completely surprised me, and satisfactorily accounted for the great and growing increase of the Irish family in Victoria.

My friend Mr. M——e knew Carty well, and between them I became assured of acquiring ample stores of information on agricultural subjects, which I felt anxious to learn for the purpose of instructing those who may harbour the intention of establishing their homes in the golden colony. The first thing that struck me in my perambulations in that district was the apparent superiority in the general style of culture as compared with the primitive husbandry amongst the Irish peasantry in their native land; but Carty's explanation of the contrast was both pat and rational. He said, in effect, "the miserable farmer at home had no means to buy either seed or implements. The one he purchased at a usurious rate from the gombeen man,* the plough and harrow, such as they were, he had to borrow, for perhaps one plough was as many as was in the townland, and he was obliged to use it on the day he engaged it whether the weather suited for turning the land or not, hurrying over the work to finish within the limited time allowed, so that it was hard to expect good husbandry under the circumstances; and then as to the rough, undrained, badly-fenced state of the farm, it was not likely," he said, "that a poor man would court his own destruction by venturing to improve on the faith of landlord encouragement without a lease. If he was fool enough to do so, the rent was immediately raised, or he was turned out to make room for some favourite of the agent,

* Gombeen man is an Irish character—a village usurer, who sells out food and seed at exorbitant rates, taking advantage of the necessities of the poor.

who held a mortgage over the property and could do what he liked with the management. Many and many an agrarian outrage and murder was the consequence of the bitter, heart-breaking disappointment which followed ejection under such circumstances, when a poor fellow, after sinking his last farthing on his farm, was turned out with his family on the road-side to perish in a ditch.

"If poor farmers got leases, or if they were taught to rely with confidence on the good faith of their landlords, they never would have been liable to the imputation of idleness and improvidence. Every spare moment would have been devoted to draining or clearing their land. Their farms would have been their savings banks, where they would have naturally put out their money to fructify to the best advantage. Crime never finds a resting-place in the brain of a well-doing, happy man, nor do politics give him either interest or uneasiness; neither would the Irish peasant have stained his hands in the one, nor interfered in the other, at the beck of agitator or priest, if the proper equitable relations existed between him and the lord of the soil. I was considered a lazy, ill-disposed man at home, even though I crossed the Channel yearly to scrape my rent together by hard work and starvation, because I would not improve my holding without the hope of being allowed to reap the benefit of my labour and outlay. If I were a lazy man or slovenly farmer, it is not likely I would possess a farm like this. If I had the danger of ejection constantly before me, I would be no better off in Victoria than I was in Ireland, but the hope of certain reward as a recompense for my toil kept my heart light, giving strength and constancy to my exertions, until I secured the honestly won prize which, thank God, I now possess. And my story, sir, is that of millions of

the Irish in America, and thousands even in this young country."

The great breadth of country under cultivation all around Kilmore excited my wonder. Before gold-digging commenced, farming was not a money-gaining employment there, but, like that on the far-west frontiers of America, it yielded a full and plentiful supply of the comforts and necessaries of life. Subsequently, however, the great demand for farm produce, and the fabulous rates it fetched, quickly converted the ploughman into a capitalist; and as Kilmore was in the direct line to M'Ivor, and also a favourite road for the Bendigo carriers, the town grew quickly in size and prosperity. Hotels and flour-mills arose like magic, and the boundaries of agricultural operations became marvellously expanded. Nothing could be more promising than the appearance of the wheat and potato crop at the time of my visit, and the yield of hay then in process of saving was abundant in the extreme. Green crops were scarce, but luxuriant beyond anything, and, as I learned, on the increase every year. I made it my business during my short stay to prosecute active inquiries relating to agriculture, which I subjoin in a desultory fashion.

I ascertained that the best time for parties to enter into the occupation of a farm is in December, for carting is then in a great measure over for the season, all up-country supplies being laid in by that period, so that cattle and horses are on an average fully thirty-five per cent. cheaper; and as the Bush roads are then dry and firm, teams can take nearly double loads at less risk; a great consideration when properly examined, especially to those who have any distance to draw their posts and rails for fencing, or the materials for erecting their dwelling. It would be well that new hands should know the overground indications of good or bad land,

which are unerringly indicated: the former by the gum-tree, the wattle, or the she-oak; the latter by stringy bark or honeysuckle. This primary knowledge is indispensable, for even good judges have been deceived by surface appearances. After selection comes fencing, which constitutes a serious item of expenditure, costing about 6s. 6d. per rod all cost told; that is, of the ordinary colonial three-railed fence, which, if properly put up, and the posts charred at the bottoms, will last twelve years. It is a good and an increasing habit to sow a species of furze called Cape broom along the fence, which grows quickly, forming a thick, impenetrable hedge, which affords shade as well as shelter, and is advanced enough to form an excellent and lasting substitute for the timber fence long before the latter gets into a state of decay.

If pisé building was generally understood it would be the best and most economic for the farmer in Victoria; but the next best for a beginner is the weatherboard house, which, if erected with care, and painted once a year, will last nearly for a generation. Slabs were used formerly, but they are now rarely resorted to, because they cannot be nicely jointed; and however so closely they may be put together in the first instance, they shrink immensely, leaving the dwelling cold and comfortless. Some of the more rough-and-ready farmers tried log-huts, but they are abominable, for, in most cases, Australian timber is rotten in the heart, and as the decay goes on it generates infinite swarms of odious vermin, which in the end drive out any occupant.

The man who has his fences up before the rainy season sets in should begin ploughing in May, but when once established, he should commence ploughing the moment the crop is removed, as in the Victorian climate there are spring-like days to be found all the year round, in which most grains

will take root, and once well rooted, they are proof against all wet and scalding. All grains should go into the ground as early as possible, say in February, or, as a general rule, whenever the previous crop is cleared away, except barley, which, if for the purpose of reaping, should be sown in June. In oats there is often a small weed-seed called drake, of which especial care should be taken, for it not only deteriorates the value of the grain, but if it once gets into the soil it is impossible to eradicate it. It grows like rye-grass, and is a black grain about the size of a small oat. It is not indigenous to Victoria, but abounds in Van Diemen's Land, whence it is supposed to be imported in hay and corn-feed, and propagated by means of the stable manure, for in the interior, where Tasmanian feed is not used, drake is unknown. Tartarean oats are considered the best seed, and will give two good crops from one sowing, as will also wheat or barley, but where a second crop is looked for the stubble requires a good heavy cross harrowing.

Potatoes should be planted between the 20th of September and the 20th of October. There is no manure required for a number of crops; there is not any appearance of weed except where stable manure is used, when drake and sorrel (also a Tasmanian importation) come up in quantity amongst the stalks, and deteriorate the quality and the return, unless they are removed. In Ireland, farmers consider the crop would be valueless unless it is moulded (second-covered, as they denominate it), when the sprout emerges a few inches from the ground; but in Victoria—I believe I may say Australia—this process is altogether dispensed with without prejudicing the crop, which is a great saving of cost where labour is so very expensive. Like grain crops, the potato is most materially affected by the humidity or dryness of the season; in 1854, two tons and a

half would have been a liberal average per acre, while in 1855, from the greater dampness of the year, so much as fifteen tons were turned out per acre in the Kilmore district, eleven to twelve tons being about the fair general average.

Turnips must be sown in May; if put in the ground sooner or later they run to seed. After rain, when the soil is moderately moist, is the most congenial time for sowing them; but should the month pass over without rain, it is labour in vain and fruitless expense to try the crop; they will run to seed without forming any bulb. White-top turnip is the best description, but in case a bigoted farmer will have swedes, he must sow them in mid-November, and only then. When turnip is sown in the proper season, and comes up healthily, it escapes the fly, which only attacks it when it shows symptoms of running to seed. Mangel-wurzel does well, and should be sown about the same time as turnip. Carrots also grow admirably, and should be sown in June or July.

Coming to common garden produce—cabbages, cauliflowers, salads, and peas—I should assign June and July as the proper months, though they will grow well at any time throughout the summer, giving them two months to mature. Cabbage has suffered frightfully from blight, caused by a fly which comes in countless swarms from blobs, or larvæ, which is deposited on the plant. The insects take wing in twenty hours after the larva is deposited, when they immediately commence their destructive career. Naturalists call them the "Aphis Brassicæ," and theorists and amateur gardeners prescribe various remedies for their destruction, which have been found quite inefficacious. There can be no doubt, however, that hot winds and heavy rains are destructive to them; but prevention is always better than cure, and I have the warrant of most experienced men in asserting that if the

cabbage is forced up quick, with good warm manure, it will escape entirely the visitation of this destructive insect. Onions do well in good mould when sown in June or July, during moisture; and celery, which was at first very rare, is now found to grow freely when planted in the end of September or the beginning of October, and transplanted from the frame in about six weeks, or whenever it has acquired sufficient growth and strength for the operation. While on the subject of garden produce, I wish to remark that sorrel is a most troublesome weed, as it grows both from root and seed, and can only be extirpated by trenching deep in dry weather and exposing it to the sun. I was much amused on my first arrival in seeing dandelion potted out in a bed as if it was a plant of great value and rarity, but it was new in the colony, and I think box and ivy are European plants which have not yet found their way to Victoria.

I will revert again to field agriculture for the purpose of quoting an authoritative article from *Facts and Figures*, comparing "Harvest Produce in England and Victoria," and amending an omission of my own in reference to some of the usual appurtenances of farming—viz. pigs and poultry. Pigs, in consequence of the open nature of post and rail fencing in Victoria, must be confined to the farm-yard, and even then they cannot be profitably propagated beyond the number sufficient to consume the house and haggard waste, for though pork fetches a high price, purchased food for swine would swallow up all the profits in the pork-market. The same remark will apply to poultry, with these addenda, that fowls of all kinds are subject to an influenza which carries them off in vast numbers, besides which they are bad layers of eggs in the colony, as is supposed from the scarcity of worms. Dairies pay well near diggings or populous locali-

ties, but in remote districts it does not pay to keep a dairy on a scale of any magnitude.

AGRICULTURE OF THE YEAR 1856 (ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1857).

Crops.			Produce.
Wheat	80,155	acres, produced	1,858,756 bushels.
Maize	327	" "	8,308 "
Barley	2,234	" "	69,548 "
Oats	25,025	" "	641,679 "
Potatoes	16,281	" "	36,895 tons.
Tobacco	76	" "	650 cwt.
Rye Grass	104	" "	115 tons.
Hay	51,806	" "	80,934 "
	176,008 acres.		

In addition to the above, there were about 2000 acres returned under the heading "Gardens," and the remainder comprised turnips and other farm crops.

FLUCTUATIONS IN HARVEST PRODUCE.

The following table of averages, deduced from the above figures, will probably be regarded not only as interesting, but instructive.

AVERAGE HARVEST PRODUCE FOR THE YEARS 1840–1856, BOTH INCLUSIVE.

Years.	Wheat.	Maize.	Barley.	Oats.	Rye.	Millet.	Potatoes.	Tobacco.	Hay.
	Bushels per acre	Bushels per acre	Bushels per acre	Bushels per acre	Bushels per acre	Bushels per acre	Tons per acre	Cwt. per acre	Tons per acre
1840	26.0	...	30.0	32.4	...	...	2.0	...	...
1841	28.1	14.6	26.6	21.5	...	...	4.0	20.0	...
1842	22.7	20.0	26.3	19.3	...	...	4.2	...	...
1843	22.3	20.8	23.6	16.9	...	...	3.4	3.3	...
1844	20.5	23.7	23.2	10.2	...	17.0	4.3	17.5	...
1845	20.4	26.1	21.3	7.4	...	...	5.5	...	...
1846	21.9	26.4	23.4	16.3	...	20.0	4.2	...	...
1847	18.7	26.5	11.5	15.2	...	...	2.7	...	...
1848	21.1	25.3	12.0	5.2	...	...	8.4	...	...
1849	19.4	...	10.5	6.1	...	...	2.0	11.3	...
1850	19.4	...	12.8	5.9	...	...	2.0	...	...
1851	24.7	53.3	25.9	20.5	1.2	...	2.5	...	1.2
1852	29.6	61.0	22.9	32.9	...	...	2.3	...	1.5
1853	20.4	3.2	25.0	22.2	18.5	...	1.7	7.7	1.5
1854	19.5	11.1	20.7	24.5	...	...	2.5	1.6	1.7
1855	27.0	24.0	29.1	34.5	...	...	5.4	...	2.7
1856	23.2	25.0	31.1	25.7	...	...	2.2	8.5	1.5

HARVEST PRODUCE IN ENGLAND AND VICTORIA.—"It would be interesting to me as an agriculturist, and doubtless would prove so to many others among your readers, if you could publish, for the purpose of comparison with the table of Victorian Harvest Produce, an account of the average yield in England for several years past. I perceive, by the experience of seventeen years in this colony, that the wheat crops yielded annually from 19½ to 29½ bushels per acre. Can you tell me how much this varies from English rates of produce? "A FARMER."

[The average produce of wheat in 1770, according to Arthur Young, in 26 English counties, was 23 bushels per acre. In 1850, according to Caird, it was 26½ bushels per acre. The range in the former period, 1770, was from 18 to 31 bushels, and in the latter, 1850, from 16 to 32 bushels. The weather has much to do with these changes from year to year, as well as indifferent farming. An unfavourable season has been known in the United Kingdom to affect the produce to the extent of 10 bushels an acre. A fluctuation of five bushels an acre above or below the average is not at all uncommon. Culture goes far to make up high averages. The lowest yield in this colony reported to us during the present year is 18 bushels of wheat per acre, and the highest 34 bushels. We have known as much as 40 bushels being obtained in England, and no doubt, as science is brought to bear in our corn-fields, both in regard to machinery and a right rotation of crops, that Victoria will successfully compete in productiveness, not only with all her neighbours, but with the most-famed and well-tilled portions of the mother country itself.]

And now let me make a few general remarks about farming and agriculture on the large and small scale. First, in reference to the price of the land, which is altogether fictitious and exorbitant, fetching prices in special localities, even far up in the interior, beyond that of the choicest part of the Lothians, Norfolk, or Limerick, without any just or sufficient reason that I can discover, beyond that feeling of insane competition which attends the auction system in all its phases. A few years since, in the glorious era of the diggings, people accounted for the ridiculous price of land on the principle of "easy got, easy gone," affirming that it was the affluent digger, who, becoming suddenly possessed of wealth, gratified his taste and his pride by making a selection, and paying any price asked by the owner. When

this theory fell through, the prices paid found a justification in the enormous prices of all descriptions of farm produce; hay 50*l.* per ton on the ground, potatoes 25*l.*, and market garden-stuff realising still more extraordinary rates. But, now-a-days, when all produce has comparatively found its level, and that the unparalleled competition in agriculture bids fair to overtop the absolute consumption by a long chalk, it is a positive mystery to me what can actuate speculators in paying such outside prices as they do for land, or small purchasers in buying from them at the extreme figures current at the present day, when we have the authority of the Prime Minister (Mr. Haines), a practical man, and one not in the habit of making positive assertions of any kind without sufficient warranty, "that farming on a large scale will not pay at present" (1856-57).

Regarding the foregoing return for 1857, I must observe that, in consequence of the extreme dryness of the season, it is sadly below the average in every description of farm produce, but comparing the acreable breadth of land under cultivation in wheat and potatoes with the population (exclusive of Chinese, who substitute rice for these edibles), and allowing a moderate average yield, it would furnish full rations of flour and potatoes to every consumer in Victoria, while the hay shown in the return—low as it is—would leave a large surplus after feeding every horse in the colony, including the wild with the working. Under this view of the case—which I know is accurate—I cannot for the life of me see how farming "*at present*" can be a lucrative occupation, for the shallowest thinker must see that it would not pay to grow produce for exportation where wages are so high, and the cost of transport so excessive. Yet even in this aspect of the argument I am met by the anomalous and unaccountable fact that California is an exporting country, and at

times sends large supplies of flour to the Melbourne market, even though the wages of farm servants average, by late accounts, eighty dollars per month, or 192*l.* 10s. per year (without rations); but whether that is a paying trade or not remains to be proved. I have my strong suspicions on the subject—indeed, I should say I am positively convinced it must be a losing game, as I could show by a simple array of figures, if I did not apprehend wearying my indulgent reader. We all know that the Americans, who are an impulsive people, most probably went into farming in excess, and having raised a surplusage of grain, were driven to manufacture and export it rather than submit to a total loss. But it does not require any abstruse arithmetical calculations to demonstrate that paying farm-labourers on the borders of 200*l.* per head, with other expenses bearing a relative proportion, the farmers of California can scarcely make both ends meet, particularly after receiving their account sales from Melbourne commission agents. But as even the sage and omniscient Manchester manufacturers export at a loss rather than accumulate stocks, it is on the cards that wheat-growers in the valley of the Sacramento may be compelled, from prudential motives, to do likewise. Reviewing the case, therefore, of Victorian farming "at present," I am altogether of Mr. Haines's opinion—I am unable to see how it can pay on a large scale just now. Small farmers, who hold their own ploughs and wield their own sickles, and whose families perform the minor operations, may and can make a comfortable living by it; and when a digger makes a lucky hit, I would by all means advise him to buy a little farm, "dear though it may be," rather than persecute Fortune in gold-seeking, but I would be slow to recommend agriculturists "of the grand type" to emigrate with the expectation of augmenting their capital, for, by the time they would

have realised upon their first crop, and compared the proceeds with the purchase-money, the cost of clearing, and fencing, and carting, adding to these expenses the little labour bill, I fear they would have found out their mistake to their cost.

When the "Distillation Bill" becomes the law of the land, and colonists work up the quantities of home-raised grain which their consumption of strong drink would necessitate; when farm-lands are sufficiently levelled and cleared to admit the wide-spread introduction of mechanical agency; and when, in fine, manual labour reasonably accommodates itself—as it must—to the cost of living, farming operations may be expanded and respectably remunerated. But these precursory inducements will take some time to develop themselves, and, until they do, I should say, "Farmers, beware, or at least be cautious."

END OF VOL. I.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.